United Nations S/PV.4501

Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4501st meeting

Thursday, 28 March 2002, 11.40 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Kolby	(Norway)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Vassilev
	Cameroon	Mr. Ngoh Ngoh
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	Colombia	Mr. Franco
	France	Mr. Doutriaux
	Guinea	Mr. Boubacar Diallo
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Mexico	Mrs. Arce de Jeannet
	Russian Federation	Mr. Granovsky
	Singapore	Mr. Lau
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eldon
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

The situation in Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2002/278).

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

02-30847 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 11.40 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2002/278)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Afghanistan in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Farhâdi (Afghanistan) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. Members of the Council have before them document S/2002/320, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bulgaria, Cameroon, China, Colombia, France, Guinea, Ireland, Mauritius, Mexico, Norway, Russian Federation, Singapore, Syrian Arab Republic, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1401 (2002).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.4502

Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4502nd meeting

Thursday, 28 March 2002, 3.25 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Kolby	(Norway)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Belinga-Eboutou
	China	Mr. Chen Xu
	Colombia	Mr. Franco
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Guinea	Mr. Boubacar Diallo
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Mauritius	Mr. Gokool
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Russian Federation	Mr. Granovsky
	Singapore	Mr. Chong
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Atieh
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Harrison
	United States of America	Mr. Rosenblatt

Agenda

The situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia (S/2002/189).

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

02-30942 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia (S/2002/189)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Somalia, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Mohamed (Somalia), took a seat at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now continue its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia, contained in document S/2002/189.

After consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council recalls the statements of its President of 31 October 2001 (S/PRST/2001/30) and of 11 January 2001 (S/PRST/2001/1) and all other previous decisions concerning the situation in Somalia. The Council, having considered the report of the Secretary-General of 21 February 2002 (S/2002/189) and having held a public meeting on 11 March 2002, reaffirms its commitment to a comprehensive and lasting settlement of the situation in Somalia, reaffirming its respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and unity of the country, consistent with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

"The Security Council reiterates its support to the Arta peace process, which continues to be the most viable basis for peace and national reconciliation in Somalia. The Council urges the Transitional National Government, local authorities and political and traditional leaders in Somalia to make every effort to complete, without preconditions, the peace and reconciliation process through dialogue and involvement of all parties in a spirit of mutual accommodation and tolerance, with the view to establish an all-inclusive Government in Somalia based on the sharing and devolution of power through the democratic process.

"The Security Council strongly supports the decisions by the 9th Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Summit and by the IGAD Foreign Ministers Committee on 14 February 2002 to convene a National Reconciliation Conference for Somalia in Nairobi in April 2002, including the Transitional National Government and all other Somali parties, without conditionalities. The Council strongly supports the call upon Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti (the frontline States) by the 9th IGAD Summit to coordinate their efforts for national reconciliation in Somalia under the supervision of the IGAD Chairman, and to hold the Reconciliation Conference under President Moi of Kenya as the coordinator of the frontline States to continue the peace process in Somalia and report to the IGAD Chairman. The Council will follow the further developments closely and emphasizes that the constructive and coordinated involvement by all frontline States is crucial for the restoration of peace and stability in Somalia. The Council calls on all States in the region, including non-IGAD States, to contribute constructively to the peace efforts for Somalia, including by using their influence to bring on board Somali groups that have thus far not joined the peace process. The Council encourages the Secretary-General, through his Special Advisor and the United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS), to support actively the IGAD initiative in the important period ahead.

"The Security Council, underlining that the future of Somalia depends, first of all, on the commitment of Somali leaders to end the suffering of their people by negotiating a peaceful end to the conflict, strongly urges all parties to participate constructively and at decision-making level in the Reconciliation Conference in Nairobi scheduled for April 2002. The Council expresses its intention to consider the situation in Somalia taking into account the outcome of the Reconciliation Conference upon its conclusion, including with regard to participation in a constructive manner by the respective parties or any lack thereof.

"The Security Council, deeply concerned about the recent fighting in Mogadishu and in the Gedo region, calls for an immediate end to all acts of violence in Somalia. The Council condemns the leaders of those armed factions who continue to be obstacles to peace and stability in Somalia. The Council emphasizes that the efforts for peace in the country should not be held hostage to deliberate acts of violence or other acts aimed at preventing the country from returning to normality and the setting up and rehabilitation of its governing structures.

"The Security Council notes with serious concern the continued flow of weapons and ammunition supplies to Somalia from other countries and the reported training of militia and plans for major offensives in southern and north-eastern parts of the country. The Council is also concerned about the illicit trafficking and trade in small arms in the entire subregion. The Council insists that no State, in particular those of the region, should interfere in the internal affairs of Somalia. Such interference only further destabilizes Somalia, contributes to a climate of fear and impacts adversely on individual human rights, and could jeopardize the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and unity of the country. The Council insists that the territory of Somalia should not be used to undermine stability in the subregion. The Council emphasizes that the situation in Somalia and the objective of long-term regional stability can most effectively be addressed if all States in the region play a positive role, including in the process of rebuilding national institutions in Somalia.

"The Security Council calls on all States and other actors to comply scrupulously with the arms embargo established by resolution 733 (1992) of 23 January 1992 and to report all information on any violations to the Committee established pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) of 24 April 1992. The Council expresses its determination to put in place concrete arrangements and/or mechanisms, by 30 April 2002, for the generation of independent information on violations and for improving the enforcement of the embargo.

"The Security Council emphasizes the necessity for further efforts against international terrorism in accordance with resolution 1373 (2001) of 28 September 2001. The Council notes the commitment of the Transitional National Government to combat international terrorism and welcomes the report submitted in this regard (S/2001/1287). The Council further notes the stated intentions by local authorities in various parts of the country to take steps pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001). The Council, insisting that persons and entities must not be allowed to take advantage of the situation in Somalia to finance, plan, facilitate, support or commit terrorist acts from the country, emphasizes that efforts to combat terrorism in Somalia are inseparable from the establishment of peace and governance in the country. In this spirit, the Council urges the international community to provide assistance to Somalia for the further and comprehensive implementation of resolution 1373 (2001).

"The Security Council notes that the downturn in remittances and freezing of accounts of individuals following the closing of the offices of the Al-Barakaat Group reduced household incomes in Somalia. The Council underlines, as a matter of urgency, the necessity to develop mechanisms that facilitate legitimate financial transfer to and from Somalia while preventing further financial flows to terrorists and terrorist groups, taking fully into account the different concerns involved. The Council is encouraged by the initiative by the United Nations Development Programme to establish a monitoring and regulatory framework for money transfer companies to facilitate their operations locally and internationally.

"The Security Council expresses concern about the humanitarian situation in Somalia, particularly in the Gedo and Bari regions. The

Council draws attention to the urgent need for international assistance, inter alia, in covering food and water shortfalls, thereby also combating potentially further destabilizing migration and outbreak of disease. It further underlines that longer-term interventions are required to stimulate economic recovery, rebuild household asset bases and promote sustained productivity. The Council calls on Member States to respond urgently and generously to the United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for 2002.

"The Security Council, noting that problems in livestock exports have severely affected the humanitarian and economic situation in Somalia, welcomes the lifting of the export ban by some States and calls on States that maintain the ban to take active steps towards the resumption of livestock imports from Somalia. The Council appreciates the efforts by the United Nations Development Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization to promote the lifting of the ban imposed by a number of States.

"The Security Council notes the recent security assessment of the Inter-Agency Mission to Somalia. The Council further notes that the security regime will follow the United Nations practice of incremental engagement with Somali communities that are moving towards peace through constant evaluation of security conditions. The Council requests the Secretary-General to keep the security situation under review, including through regular inter-agency headquarters assessment missions.

"The Security Council notes with satisfaction that, in spite of the difficult security conditions, the United Nations, the Red Cross and Red Crescent movements and non-governmental organizations continue to provide humanitarian and development assistance to all areas of Somalia. The Council condemns attacks on humanitarian personnel and calls upon all parties in Somalia to respect fully the security and safety of personnel of the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross and non-governmental organizations, and to guarantee their complete freedom of movement and access throughout Somalia.

"The Security Council values the desire of the Transitional National Government and various local authorities in Somalia to cooperate with the United Nations in creating an enabling environment for humanitarian and development assistance, and commends the peace-building activities currently implemented by United Nations agencies in the country. The Council notes that safe access for staff and assets of the United Nations, the Red Cross and Red Crescent movements and non-governmental organizations already exists in a number of areas. It further notes the trend towards improved security conditions in a number of areas in the north, middle and south of Somalia, in accordance with the Secretary-General's report.

"The Security Council notes the recommendation by the Secretary-General that the international community must increase its programmes of assistance to Somalia in creative and innovative ways, wherever the security situation allows, including by making greater efforts to ensure that the peace dividend aspect of targeted assistance is fully exploited. The Council reiterates that a comprehensive post-conflict peace building mission should be deployed once security conditions permit.

"The Security Council requests the Secretary-General, as a matter of urgency and under the current circumstances, to utilize to the fullest his Representative, in close cooperation with the United Nations Resident Coordinator for Somalia, to coordinate ongoing peace-building activities and provide for their incremental expansion, including staff strengthening, in a coherent manner and in accordance with the security arrangements. Preparatory activities on the ground for a comprehensive peace-building mission should take the following elements into account, while also considering other proposals for post-conflict peace building activities:

(a) community-based peace-building;

(b) disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration of militia, including in particular child soldiers;

(c) assessing and combating illicit trade of and trafficking in small arms;

(d) training of police with a view to establishing uniform standards of law enforcement throughout Somalia;

(e) quick-impact projects aimed at improving security;

(f) intensification of women's participation at all levels in peace-building;

(g) intensification of dialogue on humanitarian and development issues, including resolution of land claims at the local level;

(h) AIDS education and prevention.

"The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to establish, without further delay, a Trust Fund for Peace-building in Somalia to support the preparatory activities on the ground for a comprehensive peace-building mission and to supplement the United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal, as envisaged in his report of 19 December 2000 (S/2000/1211) and as indicated through the statements of its President of 11 January 2001 (S/PRST/2001/1) and of 31 October 2001 (S/PRST/2001/30), and invites donors to come forward and make contributions at an early stage.

"The Security Council, underlining its strong resolve to support in a practical manner the United Nations system in its incremental approach to peace-building in Somalia in line with the present statement, endorses a working mission to the region at the appropriate level consisting of interested members of the Council and Secretariat staff. It would welcome the facilitation and inputs by the United Nations Political Office for Somalia and the United Nations Country Team for Somalia in this regard. The Council expresses its determination to address, on the basis of the report to be submitted by the mission and the upcoming report of the Secretary-General, how it may further support in a practical and concrete manner the peace efforts in Somalia on a comprehensive basis.

"The Security Council endorses the establishment of Somalia Contact Group, to operate in Nairobi and New York. The Council invites the Nairobi branch of the Contact Group, inter alia, to promote the completion of the Arta peace process, including through the IGAD initiative referred to above; to support the implementation of the pilot peace-building programme, as stipulated above; and to elaborate practical ways and means of facilitating exchange of information through engaging various actors in the region, including the community of non-governmental organizations. The Council further underlines that the primary purpose of the New York branch of the Contact Group should be to support the Secretariat's work on Somalia with the view to ensuring that the situation in the country is given due consideration by the United Nations.

"The Security Council welcomes the appointment of Mr. Winston A. Tubman as the new Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Political Office for Somalia upon his assumption of duties in Nairobi in April 2002. The Council expresses its gratitude to the departing Representative, Mr. David Stephen, for his tireless efforts over four years in support of national reconciliation in Somalia.

"The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to address fully the requirements of the present statement in his report due on 30 June 2002.

"The Security Council remains seized of the matter."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2002/8.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 3.50 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.4503

Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4503rd meeting

Friday, 29 March 2002, 6 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Kolby	(Norway)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Belinga-Eboutou
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	Colombia	Mr. Franco
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Guinea	Mr. Boubacar Diallo
	Ireland	Mr. Ryan
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zínser
	Russian Federation	Mr. Gatilov
	Singapore	Mr. Mahbubani
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eldon
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

Letter dated 29 March from the Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/329)

Letter dated 29 March from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/331).

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

02-31029 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 6.40 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

Letter dated 29 March 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/329)

Letter dated 29 March 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/331)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Algeria, Djibouti, Egypt, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Morocco, Pakistan, Qatar, Spain and Tunisia, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Lancry (Israel) took a seat at the Council table; Mr. Baali (Algeria), Mr. Olhaye (Djibouti), Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt), Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran), Mr. Al-Kadhe (Iraq), Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein (Jordan), Mr. Barg (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), Mr. Bennouna (Morocco), Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan), Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar), Mr. Arias (Spain) and Mr. Mejdoub (Tunisia) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 29 March 2002 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, which will be issued as document S/2002/332 and which reads as follows:

"I have the honour to request that, in accordance with its previous practice, the Security Council invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations to participate in the meeting of the Security Council to be held today, Friday, 29 March 2002, regarding the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory."

I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to participate in the meeting, in accordance with the rules of procedure and with previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in response to the request contained in letters dated 29 March 2002 from the Permanent Representatives of Jordan and Qatar to the United Nations, which have been issued as documents S/2002/329 and S/2002/331, respectively.

I should also like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to photocopies of document S/2002/330, dated 28 March 2002, from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations.

I welcome the presence of Secretary-General Kofi Annan, and I give him the floor.

The Secretary-General: I have just returned from Beirut, where Arab leaders made a historic decision to embrace Crown Prince Abdullah's peace proposal, which confirmed the possibility of peace in the Middle East and proposed a way forward. And just prior to the Arab League Summit, the Security Council itself passed one of its most significant resolutions on the Middle East, resolution 1397 (2002), which affirmed the vision of two States — Israel and Palestine — living side by side within secure, internationally recognized borders. The international community must do everything possible to advance these efforts. We should not allow terrorism and extremism to prevail over the pursuit of political settlement.

I am deeply alarmed at the rapid escalation of the violence in the Middle East that we have witnessed over the past two days. Horrific terrorist acts — or attacks, if you wish — against Israeli civilians — first

in Netanya and then in Jerusalem — have been carried out. Such attacks are aimed at undermining any prospect for political settlement. I understand the anger of the Israeli Government and people over those attacks. The intention of such attacks, which I have consistently and unreservedly condemned as morally repugnant, is to subvert the possibility of any peaceful settlement. Terrorism will not bring the Palestinian people closer to the establishment of an independent Palestinian State.

Yet I have also consistently voiced criticism over Israel's use of disproportionate lethal force, especially in civilian populated areas, in response to those attacks. Such use of force will bring neither peace nor security to Israel. Both sides need to adopt policies that reinforce the prospects for a political process leading to peaceful settlement, and eschew actions that make peaceful settlement through negotiations more difficult.

I call on both Prime Minister Sharon and Chairman Arafat to exercise responsible leadership at this time. I would urge that they make every effort to take advantage of the outcome of the Arab League Summit in Beirut, which outlined a widely welcomed vision for full peace in the region. United States Special Envoy Zinni has put forward ceasefire proposals that should be accepted by the Palestinians. Israel should halt its assault on the Palestinian Authority. Destroying the Palestinian Authority will not bring Israel closer to peace.

At times like these it is possible to lose sight of the fact that there is a path away from violence and war. Via the Mitchell recommendations, the parties should move quickly to achieve the two-State vision expressed in Security Council resolution 1397 (2002) of 12 March 2002, which is based on the principle of land for peace, and Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

In your debate this evening, I would urge you to consider not only the alarming deterioration of the situation on the ground, but also how the international community can help ensure that your resolutions — particularly resolution 1397 (2002) — can become a reality, and how the international community can help the parties get back to the table.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to the Permanent Observer of Palestine.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Council is convened today on a High Holy Day, and we do indeed thank you, Mr. President, for your response in convening this meeting to consider the current grave situation. We would also like to thank Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his presence here today, as well as for his constant efforts to end the ongoing tragedy in Palestine, and in the Middle East in general, with a view to establishing peace in the region.

We are gathered today in the wake of a new, insane step taken by Mr. Ariel Sharon and his Government — at a time when the Israeli occupation forces have dispatched their tanks and armoured vehicles, with the support of helicopter gunships, in order to destroy and smash through the headquarters of President Arafat of Palestine, the elected President of the Palestinian National Authority and Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Israeli forces have destroyed most of the President's compound, with the exception of the single building in which the President himself remains in the company of a very limited number of his aides. This has put his personal safety at high risk, and talking about guarantees of his personal safety would add insult to pain and suffering. It is unprecedented for occupying forces to use such weaponry to attack a location of this nature. Israel, the occupying Power, has committed grave mistakes against our people. Let me state here that any harm to President Arafat would be the mother of all those mistakes.

Israeli occupation forces have also occupied the city of Ramallah, the largest Palestinian urban centre, as well as reoccupied parts of other Palestinian towns, such as Nablus and Bethlehem, and torn the Gaza Strip into three separate areas. The Israeli Government has also declared Yasser Arafat to be its enemy. Mr. Sharon has declared that the military operation under way will last for weeks.

I must state that this represents the beginning of the destruction of the elected Palestinian Authority and the start of removing Yasser Arafat, the reoccupation of Palestinian territory and, in brief, throwing the situation back to pre-Oslo. This is Mr. Sharon's true political purpose. The man has made no secret of these positions. Time and again he has publicly declared his great hatred for the peace framework agreements in the

context of Oslo. Time and again he has refused to accept a final settlement and has repeatedly declared his rejection, of even the Mitchell recommendations. In point of fact, Mr. Sharon wants to return to the pre-Oslo status and to attempt to create isolated Palestinian entities under local proxy leaders because, briefly, he does not want to put an end to occupation and he is not interested in a genuine, peaceful settlement.

Many of us did not want to see these facts. I am speaking of these political facts that surround the character of Mr. Sharon and his declared positions — I repeat, declared positions — in defiance of the entire international community. This insane Israeli step comes directly on the heels of the 14th Arab Summit Meeting, which was held in Beirut. The participants of the Summit adopted resolutions of landmark significance — resolutions that guarantee a change in the entire situation in the Middle East region — and perhaps this is one of the reasons for the timing of the Israeli actions now. Mr. Sharon tried to frustrate the positive outcome of this Summit by insisting on a military blockade of President Arafat in order to deny him the chance to participate in the Arab Summit. When this failed, the onslaught, in this form, started, and it may kill the positive potential of the Beirut Summit.

In some Israeli quarters it is being said that what is going on is only a reaction to the explosions, the latest of which took place in Netanya, undertaken by Palestinians inside Israel. We in the Palestinian Authority and in the Palestinian leadership have categorically condemned these explosions. And, by the way, we have condemned them not only in English, as some have claimed; indeed, we have condemned them in Arabic as well and, if you wish, will do so in all United Nations languages. These silly interpretations are an insult to the Palestinian people. Our position is clear: we are against such acts because they do not serve Palestinian national interests.

However, Mr. Sharon's Government has indeed destroyed the Palestinian security institutions and has reduced their capabilities to a minimum. On the one hand, the Israeli forces have laid siege to President Arafat and have a stranglehold on the entire Palestinian people. On the other hand, they have called on the Palestinian people to fulfil their obligations. This is perverted logic. It is impossible to comprehend. The Palestinians could put an end to this phenomenon once they feel that there is hope for the future, that the end of Israeli occupation is only a matter of time, that Palestinian statehood is coming and that there is indeed a future for their children rather than a perpetuation of occupation, oppression, siege and the presence of Israeli settlements that destroy the fabric of their lives.

All this notwithstanding, the Palestinian side has tried to deal with the facts on the ground. We have accepted the Mitchell recommendations and, after that, we accepted the Tenet plan. Obviously, however, the Israeli side buried the Mitchell recommendations under a cover provided by some parties. Only yesterday President Arafat declared his willingness to implement a ceasefire and to implement unconditionally the Tenet plan. The other side — and here I appeal to this Council to recognize this — rejected the mere mention of the Mitchell recommendations or their implementation at a point later in time. They made no mention of the Mitchell recommendations. At the same time, they expected the Palestinian side to be convinced that Tenet would lead to Mitchell and all would lead to the resumption of peace talks, which would result in a political solution.

The status quo cannot continue. We cannot turn ourselves into an ostrich that buries its head in the sand; we cannot try to address only the security concerns, as advanced by Mr. Sharon. This will not be possible without a political framework. This will not be possible without a promise to put an end to occupation.

Once again, I wish to pay tribute to the position set forth time and again by the United Nations Secretary-General in terms of the need to address the situation on the ground and to address the security question in a political context. Disregarding the Secretary-General's call and continuing the attempt to serve Mr. Sharon's goals will lead nowhere.

We came to the Security Council convinced that the Council has responsibilities under the Charter that it must uphold. This is a matter of principle. We also came to the Council in order to affirm the need for the Security Council to follow up the implementation of its resolution 1397 (2002), the landmark resolution cited by the Secretary-General which has yet to be implemented, despite some positive indications from certain Israeli quarters. The Israeli Government has neither issued any official position on that resolution nor stated its commitment to fulfilling its provisions.

The Palestinian side has done so and is still waiting for the Israeli side to state its position in that regard.

We, too, want this Council to address the extremely grave situation created by Mr. Sharon and the Israeli occupation forces since daybreak yesterday, Palestine time. Specifically, we want this Council to issue an order halting acts of aggression and for Israeli forces to withdraw from Palestinian towns, including Ramallah, as a first step towards the implementation of the Tenet plan and the Mitchell recommendations. This is the central issue at this moment — in addition, of course, to the Council's affirmation of its traditional support for the peace process and for the efforts of the Secretary-General and of the special envoys to the Middle East, be they those of the Secretary-General, the United States, the Russian Federation or the European Union.

This is what we expect from the Security Council; indeed, we have distributed a Palestinian text to all members of the Council in the hope that it will receive their support. We further hope that the Council will also, swiftly and expeditiously, take the necessary measures to make its own contribution to halting the deterioration of the situation on the ground and to helping restore conditions to a positive track. This is the natural role of the Security Council and what we hope will be achieved.

The entire Middle East needs the Council's action, especially given the promise of peace emanating from Beirut. This will require specific action to dispel the threat of war currently looming over the heart of the city of Ramallah.

The President: I now call on the representative of Israel.

Mr. Lancry (Israel): At the outset, I would like to welcome Secretary-General Kofi Annan and to express my gratitude for his unshakeable faith in peace and for his statement, delivered moments ago, in which he indeed expressed this vision and this faith.

The latest horrific acts of Palestinian terrorism are occurring as Jews throughout Israel and throughout the world celebrate Passover, the festival of freedom. The Passover massacre on Wednesday, which has claimed the lives of 22 innocent civilians and injured well over 100, occurred as 250 people sat down to enjoy their festive Seder meal at the Park Hotel in the coastal city of Netanya. The attacker, Mr. Odeh, was a man whom Israel has been requesting Palestinian security forces to arrest for involvement in terrorist activities for some four years.

Before and since that reprehensible massacre just 48 hours ago, which the world has watched in horror, there have been yet more acts of terrorism. A Palestinian policeman gunned down two members of the Temporary International Presence in Hebron, injuring a third. A 16-year-old Palestinian girl blew herself up at a Jerusalem supermarket, killing two shoppers and injuring many more. A family of four in Alon Moreh was gunned down by a Hamas gunman. Many of these acts were committed by members of the Al-Aksa Brigade, the military wing of Chairman Arafat's own Fatah movement, over which he exercises direct responsibility. In all, since General Zinni's arrival in the region, 49 Israelis have been killed; in the month of March alone, 102 Israelis have been murdered.

This, then, has been the Palestinian leadership's response to Security Council resolution 1397 (2002) and to the mission of United States Special Envoy Anthony Zinni and the visit of Vice-President Dick Cheney to the region. These measures were designed to bring about a ceasefire and to enable the parties to implement the Tenet plan and the Mitchell Committee recommendations to pave the way to a political settlement.

For its part, Israel took clear and specific steps to ensure that these measures would succeed. We welcomed resolution 1397 (2002), both in the vision that it endorsed and in the concrete details it outlined to bring an end to the violence, terrorism and incitement. It is not included in my written statement, but if Ambassador Al-Kidwa should somehow remain doubtful, I would be more than happy to send him the official statement of Foreign Minister Shimon Peres on behalf of the Israeli Government. Maybe it will convince him that we have, in a genuine way, embraced both the vision and the concrete details of Security Council resolution 1397 (2002). I say this in a spontaneous way in the English that I practice, according to Ambassador Al-Kidwa.

Israel withdrew its troops from territories under Palestinian control. Prime Minister Sharon declared that Israel would not insist on seven days of quiet before entering the Tenet and Mitchell process, and we have accepted the compromise proposals presented by

Special Envoy Zinni to begin the implementation of the Tenet plan.

Everyone is aware — contrary to the assertions of my colleague, Ambassador Al-Kidwa — that Israel has accepted, and has declared its acceptance, of Mitchell and Tenet in full. If any more proof were needed of Israel's unequivocal commitment to a ceasefire and to a political settlement, it could be found in the support expressed for certain promising aspects of the Arab summit peace proposal and in the fact that in the past week, despite continued terrorist attacks, including a devastating suicide bombing at a Jerusalem café, we continued to show maximum restraint and withheld any response.

But Israel cannot walk alone on the path leading to a cessation of violence and a resumption of political dialogue. Throughout this entire period, the voice of the Palestinian leadership has not been one of moderation; it has been a voice of terrorism. Chairman Arafat and the Palestinian Authority have failed to take even the most minimal steps to end the violence and terrorism, in blatant disregard of the will of the international community, including resolution 1397 (2002). Despite that most fundamental obligation, which Chairman Arafat accepted at the beginning of the Oslo process, to renounce terrorism and resolve all disputes by peaceful means, Chairman Arafat has made it abundantly clear, both through his actions and his inaction, that the murder of innocent Israeli civilians is legitimate and desirable, that somehow terrorism and dialogue can live side by side.

The glorification of suicide bombings against innocent civilians — targeted precisely because they are innocent — the rejection of envoy Zinni's proposals and the continuing failure to arrest known terrorists enjoying protection and support in Palestinian territory and in the presidential compound of Chairman Arafat, are but some of the signs that Chairman Arafat has no intention of reaching a peaceful settlement.

What is Israel to do in the face of these deliberate massacres of its civilians and the abject failure of the Palestinian leadership to fulfil its most basic moral and legal commitments? At a time when the world has come to realize to dangers of terrorism and the dangers of appeasing terrorists, can there be any doubt as to the right and fundamental duty of States to protect their civilians from this deadly scourge?

Are we supposed to find comfort in the most recent feeble call by Chairman Arafat, which is accompanied not by concrete measures but by calls to martyrdom? Is this any different from the 11 other ceasefire initiatives which Chairman Arafat brazenly violated, affirming his infamous practice of double talk, by which he seeks to placate his Western audience on the one hand, while stoking the flames of hatred and terror on the other?

In these circumstances, Israel is compelled to take the measures Chairman Arafat and the Palestinian leadership have steadfastly refused to take. We will exercise our basic right of self-defence and target the vast terrorist infrastructure that the Palestinian Authority continues to nurture and sustain in its territory. In doing so, we will take all necessary measures to minimize harm to innocent civilians. In doing so, we will make clear that there can be no tolerance for terrorism, which deliberately targets the innocent; that terrorism and peace cannot coexist; that they are, simply, each other's enemies.

We have no intention of occupying any territory under Palestinian control; our intention is to uproot the terrorist network that exists there. And in doing so, we will, as we always have done, keep our hand outstretched for peace.

To the Palestinian people we say, once again, that if the vision outlined in resolution 1397 (2002) is your goal, then peace is no illusion. That vision, as we do remember, was reached at Camp David, and it can unfold in the future. We can walk that road together — through dialogue, not through confrontation. But the Palestinian leadership, and the terrorist organizations flourishing in its territory, send Israelis and the world a very different message. Every suicide bombing, every glorified martyr, every terrorist released from a Palestinian jail, every parent that wishes her son or daughter to grow up to kill Jews, undermines that vision and hurts the Palestinian cause and the cause of peace.

To the international community we say, once again, that we must make it absolutely clear that terrorism can never be tolerated. The focus must be — can only be — on the complete de-legitimization of terrorism as a means to achieve political ends. If we are serious about the war on terror, we must condemn it wherever it breeds. What incentive do we give the Palestinian leadership to renounce terror as a strategy,

when we tolerate terrorism and focus attention on those defending against it rather than those perpetrating it? What dangerous power do we give extremists throughout the world if we create the impression that their deadly methods can succeed?

Events have shown that international pressure on the Palestinian leadership to end terrorism can yield results. Chairman Arafat, with a 40,000-strong police force, can be convinced to fight terrorism. But for that to happen, for peace for Israelis and Palestinians to have a chance, the message to Chairman Arafat must be clear, comprehensive and unrelenting.

Let us hope, at least, that the Palestinian people themselves will heed this call and demand of their leaders to finally live up to their most basic responsibilities.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Turkey in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Cengizer (Turkey) took a seat at the side of the Council Chamber.

Mr. Ryan (Ireland): Ireland fully associates itself with the statement to be made shortly by the representative of Spain on behalf of the European Union.

It is now impossible to exaggerate the gravity of the situation in the Middle East. It is, in the most fundamental sense, a threat to international peace and security and to the well-being and security of the Israeli and Palestinian peoples and of the peoples of the region.

In resolution 1397 (2002), the Council, only a couple of weeks ago, affirmed a vision of a region where two States — Israel and Palestine — would live, side by side, within secure and recognized borders.

Since we adopted that resolution, the situation in the region has gravely deteriorated. Acts of violence, terror and the excessive use of military force have created a vicious circle of violence and counter-violence, reprisal and counter-reprisal. It is perfectly clear that the parties are now trapped and cannot emerge without outside help.

The Prime Minister of Ireland, Mr. Bertie Ahern, earlier today issued a statement appealing to the Israeli Government and the Palestinian authorities and to their respective peoples to pull back from conflict. The Prime Minister called for an immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from the territories controlled by the Palestinian Authority and for an end to Israeli harassment of President Arafat.

Mr. Ahern appealed for an end to all acts of violence and terror, and he condemned in the strongest possible terms the continuing attacks against Israeli civilians. He called on all parties concerned to declare an immediate ceasefire and to commence the implementation of the Tenet and Mitchell proposals, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1397 (2002) of 12 March 2002.

I should add that Prime Minister Ahern conveyed this position to President Arafat this evening when they spoke by telephone. He expressed concern for the unacceptable situation in which President Arafat has been placed, and he appealed to him, notwithstanding the restrictions placed on him, to do all in his power to prevent further violence.

Ireland utterly condemns the Netanya terrorist attack and the other atrocities committed against Israeli civilians. As our Secretary-General just said to the Council, such actions only subvert prospects for a political settlement. These acts of terrorism must end, and they must end now.

It should — to put it at its mildest — be entirely clear by now to all sides that no solution can be found through terrorism or any other form of violence or through military action. Ireland regards the current Israeli military actions, including in Ramallah, as deeply dangerous and unwise. Whatever the provocations, they serve only to exacerbate bitterness and alienation among the Palestinian people.

President Arafat is, and will remain, the only possible interlocutor for Israel in any process of dialogue leading to an end to violence and to negotiations on a political settlement. He cannot fulfil this role if he is not allowed to fulfil it, by acts of

gratuitous insult and humiliation and by his enforced physical isolation.

Security Council resolution 1397 (2002) represents the only way forward: immediate cessation of all acts of violence and both sides to cooperate in the implementation of the Tenet work plan and the Mitchell report recommendations.

The international community, the Secretary-General, the quartet and General Zinni, in his current mission, all are working to help resolve the current tragic cycle of violence. To help resolve the impasse, however, they must be allowed to help, and they must be listened to.

My delegation calls on the Israeli and Palestinian leaderships to pull back now from the brink and for agreement on an immediate and unconditional ceasefire. There are signs of hope. Yesterday's proposals by Arab League leaders are an extremely important and positive development, as the Secretary-General stressed tonight. But without restraint and the strongest political will on both sides, such efforts by the international community or regional leaders will remain only that — only hopes in an uncontrolled and uncontrollable spiral of violence.

An end to violence is now the immediate imperative. Beyond that, in the spirit of resolution 1397 (2002), there is a vital need for both sides to recognize that a peace process must involve partnership and that only through political negotiations and a political settlement can both parties at last learn to coexist side by side , at peace with each other.

Both sides must now rise to the challenge of ending the violence and building the peace. For our part, the wider international community must leave no action untaken in helping to end the pursuit of a path that can lead only to catastrophe and in helping the parties to begin again the process of dialogue and negotiations.

All, including the Council, who are in a position to help the parties to emerge from this grave crisis must maintain their engagement to this end.

Mr. Boubacar Diallo (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomes the holding of this emergency public meeting on the grave situation in the Middle East, which the Secretary-General described in his statement and which requires no elaboration.

The suicide attacks by certain Palestinian groups and the attack by the Israeli army against the headquarters of Chairman Arafat attest to the need for urgent and coordinated action on the part of the Security Council and for the unconditional implementation of resolution 1397 (2002).

In this respect, the Council must, in exercising its responsibilities, reaffirm its steadfast dedication to a vision of a region in which two States — Palestine and Israel — coexist side by side within recognized and secure borders.

The question of security and that of a political settlement of the conflict are, in our opinion, indissociable. My delegation therefore asks Chairman Arafat and Prime Minister Sharon to ensure that the ceasefire is respected and to abide by the relevant Security Council resolutions.

My delegation takes note of the adoption at the Beirut Arab Summit of a peace plan for the settlement of the Middle East situation in general. That plan is based on the principle of land for peace and should, in our opinion, facilitate a return to the negotiating table.

In this context, our delegation will spare no effort in the process of enabling the Council to define the elements of a common action that is commensurate with the tremendous challenge that confronts us all.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): France fully associates itself with the statement to be made shortly by the Ambassador of Spain on behalf of the European Union.

The situation in the Middle East is exceptionally serious. The highest authorities in France today expressed their deepest concern at the tragic turn events have taken. France calls for the immediate cessation of all forms of violence and terror, the cessation of hostilities and the conclusion without delay of a ceasefire between Palestinians and Israelis.

France asks Chairman Arafat to take all necessary measures to put an end to violence and acts of terror. France asks Prime Minister Sharon to put an end without delay to the military operations carried out by the Israeli forces, which should begin a withdrawal.

Nothing can justify the killing of innocent civilians. The Netanya attack and the Jerusalem attack today should be condemned with horror. As the Secretary-General has recalled on several occasions,

terrorist attacks are morally repugnant and hateful. We express our compassion and deep condolences to all of the victims and to their families.

The Palestinian Authority has the responsibility to do everything in its power to combat terrorism, but it can do so only if its capacities are maintained and it is not weakened. Yasser Arafat can act only if one gives him the means with which to act.

The French authorities are convinced that the reaction of Prime Minister Sharon and of his Government in response to the attacks is leading to a disastrous cycle of violence and to a tragic impasse. All-out repression, the excessive use of force, collective punishment against an entire people — a people that has been enclosed and humiliated — and the relentless harassment of Yasser Arafat, who is the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, is fuelling an endless spiral of violence. Those acts are unacceptable.

The action that began this morning in Ramallah and several other West Bank towns must cease. Israeli forces must begin their withdrawal. The physical integrity and personal safety of the President of the Palestinian Authority must be protected, and his full freedom of movement must be restored. Action against humanitarian and medical institutions and personnel and especially against ambulances is unjustifiable. All must be guaranteed access to medical care and emergency medical services.

France has said, and we repeat, that peace cannot be attained by force of arms. There is no military solution. To cling solely to a security approach is an illusion and a trap. The situation will remain at an impasse as long as the Israeli Government refuses, in parallel with its security measures, to undertake political negotiations leading to the creation of an independent, viable and democratic Palestinian State. Security aspects and the settlement of political must be addressed head-on. Terrorism must be combated as if there were no peace negotiations; peace negotiations must be conducted as if there were no terrorism.

The highest French authorities welcomed the Arab summit statement adopted yesterday at Beirut, entitled an Arab peace initiative and inspired by the proposals of Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia. That statement is a historic contribution to a peaceful future for the Middle East. It outlines the prospect of a comprehensive and lasting peace based on the normalization of relations between all Arab States and Israel in exchange for a complete end to Israeli occupation of the territories conquered in 1967, in line with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002) and with the principle of land for peace.

For the immediate future, France urgently calls upon the parties to demonstrate wisdom. Leaders on both sides have a cardinal responsibility to put an end to the escalation of violence and to pursue peace. The international community must help them to achieve this. We welcome and encourage diplomatic efforts undertaken on all sides; these should be stepped up. We hope that the United States will re-engage itself still further. The European Union is increasingly active, particularly in the context of the "quartet", which is tirelessly pursuing its efforts in the region.

Two weeks ago the Security Council adopted resolution 1397 (2002) which, inter alia, demanded immediate cessation of all acts of violence. That resolution must be implemented. Arms must not have the last word; the parties must return to the path of reason and the path of peace. In these tragic circumstances, the Security Council must forcefully remind them of this.

Mr. Koonjul (Mauritius): Thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this public meeting at such short notice. I should like to acknowledge the presence of the Secretary-General and to thank him for the very good statement he made. My delegation associates itself with that statement and supports it fully.

The situation in the Middle East has clearly gone out of control. We have had the opportunity here on several occasions to say that the vicious circle of unabated violence can only lead to a full-fledged war in the Middle East. The acts of terror which have befallen innocent Israeli civilians, followed by the Israeli military actions on Chairman Arafat's headquarters in Ramallah, are fast taking us to full-scale war. It is extremely important therefore for the Security Council to act collectively to bring the two parties to their senses.

Let me express in the strongest terms my delegation's condemnation of all acts of terror, especially against innocent civilians.

These events are happening at a juncture when the initiative of Crown Prince Abdullah has been

adopted by the Arab summit at Beirut; that initiative provides some very important light at the end of a very long tunnel. They are happening at a time when the Security Council has just adopted resolution 1397 (2002), setting out the vision of a Palestinian State living side by side with Israel.

The Secretary-General, in his statement to the press today and in his statement a short time ago in this Chamber, rightly said that those who perpetrated the recent terrorist acts, killing innocent civilians, are extremists and the enemies of peace. We wonder, however, whether the actions taken by Prime Minister Sharon, who claims, together with many others, that he is acting in the self-defence of his country and of its citizens, will or can lead to an end to terrorist activities. The disproportionate use of force and the siege of several cities and of the headquarters of Chairman Arafat, instead of curbing acts of terrorism — which, as many are aware, are considered acts of martyrdom by the Palestinians — will in fact cause them to take on wider proportions.

One cannot expect a leader to exercise control over his people when he is himself under siege and when he is made to undergo the worst forms of humiliation.

In a statement that the Foreign Minister of Mauritius made to the press today, he stated that Mauritius was horrified by the escalation of violence and by the Israeli action against Chairman Arafat, which we consider to be acts of provocation. He called on the two sides and on the two leaders to exercise maximum restraint and to act towards the implementation of the Tenet plan and the recommendations of the Mitchell report.

The senseless decision to attack Chairman Arafat's Ramallah headquarters and Prime Minister Sharon's decision to isolate Chairman Arafat are totally inadmissible, appalling and unwise. Prime Minister Sharon recently mentioned that he regretted his earlier commitment not to hurt Chairman Arafat; such humiliation of Chairman Arafat will have extremely negative repercussions on the peace process and is likely to further infuriate the Palestinians.

The United States Secretary of State, Mr. Powell, today said that Chairman Arafat is the leader of the Palestinian people and that his leadership is now even more central to trying to find a way out of this tragic situation. We fully share and support that assessment. It is therefore extremely important that Chairman Arafat be strengthened rather than weakened. Let me also say that, in the view of my delegation, Chairman Arafat remains the only interlocutor with whom Israel can negotiate peace. We call upon Prime Minister Sharon and Chairman Arafat to renounce violence and to take the bold step that would bring them to the negotiating table. There cannot be peace until the two protagonists resume negotiations towards a political settlement of the Middle East issue based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

We fully support the work currently being undertaken by General Zinni and the other special envoys, and we sincerely hope that their efforts will not be deterred by the recent incidents.

We believe that it is time for the Security Council to consider ways and means to translate the vision enshrined in resolution 1397 (2002) into reality. We suggest that a special group of influential world leaders be set up. That group, together with the Secretary-General, could work towards the creation of an independent Palestinian State, as spelled out in Security Council resolution 1397 (2002) and based on resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

Mr. Eldon (United Kingdom): The Permanent Representative of Spain will speak on behalf of the European Union later in this debate, and I fully associate myself with the statement he will make then.

It is right that the Council should be meeting in emergency session this evening. The situation is extremely critical for the millions of people who live in Israel and the occupied territories. Israelis and Palestinians should benefit from having the views of the Council, the Secretary-General — to whom I am very grateful for the statement he made at the beginning of tonight's debate — and the wider membership tonight.

Security Council resolution 1397 (2002) sets out the key elements of the way forward. That resolution was a clear demonstration of the Council's will, and it should be acted upon. The key elements include a vision of a region where two States — Israel and Palestine — live side by side within secure and recognized borders; an immediate cessation of all acts of violence, including all acts of terror, provocation, incitement and destruction; and a call upon the Israeli and Palestinian sides and their leaders to cooperate in the implementation of the Tenet work plan and the

Mitchell report recommendations, with the aim of resuming negotiations on a political settlement. The United Kingdom stands foursquare behind resolution 1397 (2002). Both sides must take action to ensure that it becomes a reality.

As the Secretary-General said earlier today, the way out of this escalating and vicious cycle of reprisals and counter-violence is for both parties to move ahead as speedily as possible, via the Mitchell recommendations, to achieve the two-State vision expressed in resolution 1397 (2002). We, like others who have spoken tonight, support the ongoing efforts by General Zinni, the Secretary-General, the European Union and others to assist the parties to halt the violence and resume the peace process.

The Arab Summit in Beirut earlier this week presented a new opportunity. We welcome its endorsement of Crown Prince Abdullah's initiative and urge Israel to respond positively to the assurances Arab States have offered on its future security. A comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East is attainable based on relevant United Nations resolutions, in particular Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). The Arab Summit outcome strengthens the consensus on the broad outlines of a settlement. But the events of the last few days show that never has there been a greater need for restraint to be shown on both sides. Restraint in the face of violence is a sign of courage, not weakness.

It can only be through negotiation that there will ever be a peaceful future for Israel, Palestine and the people of the entire region. A lasting settlement remains frustratingly elusive. The simple fact of geography means that both sides will have to live together in peace. Restraint and statesmanship are required, and all forms of violence must end immediately. These should be the Council's messages to the two sides tonight.

Mr. Cunningham (United States): Just a little more than two weeks ago, the Council took a very important step when it adopted resolution 1397 (2002). Others have referred to its importance. That resolution contains a number of valuable elements. Among other things, it calls for an immediate halt to terror and violence. That call has been ignored by those who would obstruct efforts to achieve a ceasefire and work toward peace. The few optimistic signs that developed in the last two weeks have been endangered once again by terror.

We should be perfectly clear in our discussion tonight: it is terrorism — repeated brutal acts of terrorism — perpetrated against innocent civilians by those who oppose peace that has brought the situation to the current extremely grave and dangerous state. Both Israeli and Palestinian hopes for a peaceful future are under attack by this terror. As Secretary Powell said earlier today, once again, terrorism that targets innocent civilians has dealt a serious blow to the effort to achieve a ceasefire and to find a political solution to the crisis in the Middle East. Terrorists have set back the vision of the Palestinian people for a State that would live in peace side by side with Israel.

We condemn the acts of terrorism perpetrated by Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades. We reiterate our calls on Chairman Arafat to bring the perpetrators and their supporters to justice. All those who support peace must reinforce this message, from whatever region. There is no other way forward.

In recent weeks there was cause for some guarded optimism. Last fall, President Bush set out his vision at the United Nations for a Palestinian State living side by side in peace with a Jewish State. We saw positive reaction to the speech that Secretary Powell gave in Louisville. The United Nations passed an important Security Council resolution, resolution 1397 (2002), which was introduced by the United States. The resolution went through the Security Council with a vote of 14 to 0, and only one abstention. This resolution, importantly, set out a vision for the future and established an outline for progress. The Arab Summit in Beirut earlier this week, while it did not provide a complete solution, laid out a vision that was put forward by Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia and was embraced by all Arab nations. We strongly welcomed that. Prime Minister Sharon in recent weeks showed flexibility with respect to conditions he had previously held to with respect to what it would take to get started on the Tenet work plan. Both sides welcomed General Zinni's return to get the work plan started, which would then lead to the Mitchell process and the political solution and political discussion and negotiation that all of us are hoping for. Vice-President Cheney travelled in the region and was prepared to see Chairman Arafat if circumstances had permitted.

So there was some reason for guarded optimism. Let us be clear about what has brought it all to a halt: terrorism on the part of those who target innocent civilians with the explicit purpose of destroying hopes for peace.

The United States is gravely concerned at the very dangerous situation in Ramallah. We deplore the killing and wounding of innocent Palestinian civilians, just as we condemn the killing of innocent Israeli civilians as a result of terrorist attacks. We understand that Israel has a right to self-defence, but we call on Prime Minister Sharon and his Government to carefully consider the consequences of their actions. Chairman Arafat is the leader of the Palestinian people and his leadership is now, and will be, central to any meaningful effort to restore calm. We have made clear to the Israeli Government that he should not be harmed.

The Security Council, my Government and the international community have endorsed a vision of two States — Israel and Palestine — living side by side in peace. That vision must not be defeated by a small minority dedicated solely to death and destruction. There is a positive way forward, as the Secretary-General has explained. We must move forward, but the cycle of violent action and reaction in the Middle East must stop.

The United States is pressing to bring about a ceasefire, and General Zinni remains in the region engaged in that very effort. Despite the events of these past few days, he will work hard to get the parties to implement the Tenet security work plan and to move further toward the resumption of a political process. We urge both parties to cooperate fully with General Zinni to put in place immediately a lasting ceasefire and to take the steps that will bring tangible benefits to both peoples. That is the only solution to the crisis before us.

Mr. Gatilov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation is seriously concerned that the Palestinian and Israeli confrontation — and the situation in the region as a whole — is now on the brink of the most severe crisis and severe escalation that we have seen. If we do not break this vicious cycle of terror and retribution, and even greater acts of violence and terrorism, then the Middle East will be on the brink of a new full-scale war.

We regret that the recent terrorist actions and the massive Israeli Army actions provide the backdrop to what has happened recently — that is, the promising steps that have been taken to ensure a ceasefire and an end to the violence. We are convinced that, in these circumstances, all those who are looking for a way out of the confrontation between Israel and Palestine and who are looking towards restoring the negotiating process must show a maximum of political will in an effort to avert further degradation of the situation and to end the real threat of war in the region.

We call on the leadership of the Palestinian Authority to take vigorous steps to put an end to the actions of extremists and to punish those who participate in terrorist acts. We call on the Israeli Government to show restraint and not resort to massive retaliation, and to refrain from steps that could further destabilize the situation in the region. Only in this way will it be possible to stabilize the situation.

A major thrust of these efforts must remain for the Israelis and the Palestinians to comply with the Tenet plan and the Mitchell report recommendations, as indicated in Security Council resolution 1397 (2002), on a political settlement that must be based on the principles of international law. We must not allow further emasculation of what we have gained through a lot of work in the last few months. In spite of the "crisis logic", we must not lose the momentum of the peacekeeping potential, in particular the decisions taken at the Beirut Arab League Summit.

Russia, as a participant in the peace process and a member of the quartet of international mediators, will continue its useful work with the parties in order to achieve agreement on a ceasefire, normalization of the situation and renewal of constructive negotiations on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the land-for-peace formula.

We believe the current situation demands that the Security Council send a clear signal to both sides and call on them to effect a ceasefire and renew their political dialogue.

Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore): We have listened carefully to the debate so far. Having done so, we are struck by three paradoxes, the first of which is that this weekend, as several speakers have commented, is one of the world's holiest weekends: Passover, Good Friday, Easter. This holy weekend is being celebrated at one of the world's holiest sites. At this moment, we

should be seeing celebrations or reflections of peace. Instead, we see an extremely high level of violence.

This is not a normal situation. We suggest that perhaps the time has come for both the Council and the international community to reflect — and to reflect in a very profound fashion — on how we have reached this incredible point this weekend.

The second paradox is that in real terms we have probably never been closer to achieving a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. As several speakers have said today, resolution 1397 (2002) was clearly a landmark decision. We have also recently seen the endorsement of the Saudi peace plan by the Arab Summit in Beirut. There are many conversations about the Middle East peace process taking place within the United Nations community — conversations in this public room and those in the corridors. From the conversations in the corridors it is very clear that when we talk about what a comprehensive peace settlement will look like, we all refer to these developments — that is, resolution 1397 (2002) and the Saudi peace plan. Yet, having come so far in terms of generating this international consensus, we once again seem to be moving further away from real peace.

There is a third paradox. Again, listening to statements made so far, we are struck by how much more unified the Council has become on the issue of the Middle East in recent months. This has been demonstrated most clearly by the adoption of resolution 1397 (2002). A more unified Council should have brought us closer to, rather than further away from, peace. But the mere fact that we are holding this extraordinary meeting on this weekend demonstrates how small an impact the Council has on the real situation on the ground. We believe that the time has come for the Council to assume its responsibilities.

Today, despite the grave tragedies and the great dangers facing us, we have heard many voices of reason here. Singapore is a small — not a big — voice in the Council. But we would like to add our small voice to the voices of reason in the hope that they will have an accumulated effect on our deliberations.

In this spirit, we would like to suggest four points for the Council when it reacts to the latest developments. The first is that we must condemn all of the violence and make the point loudly and clearly that violence is not the solution. Our second point is that, in order to ensure our sending a clear signal that violence is not the solution, we must not allow the extreme measures being taken by both sides — extreme measures which clearly, as everyone has said here, exacerbate the situation and damage and derail the peace process — to dictate how we go from here.

The third point is that we should build on the positive developments we have seen in recent weeks. We should build on resolution 1397 (2002), and we should build on the positive outcome of the recent Beirut Summit. We should ensure that these positive developments are not lost.

The fourth point is that the Security Council must react and react — we would like to stress — in a unified fashion to the latest developments. We realize that sometimes it is difficult to get the Council to take unified positions on the Middle East question. But one way out that we have is to build on the careful statements made by the Secretary-General in previous weeks, this morning and in his latest statement. Sometimes it appears that there is no viable middle ground on the Middle East question. But the Secretary-General's careful and well-balanced statements demonstrate that we can develop such middle ground, and we hope that the Security Council will build on the Secretary-General's statements.

Mr. Franco (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to express our deep concern over the escalation of violence in the Middle East. The situation has spun out of control, as recent events demonstrate. We emphatically condemn the terrible act of terror in Netanya and other recent acts that have caused the death of an excessive number of civilians. In making this condemnation, we call into question and reject the disproportionate use of force by Israel. The actions taken in Ramallah by the armed forces of Israel do not contribute in any way either to establishing a process that generates the conditions for security or to finding a political solution to this spiral of violence.

We are thoroughly convinced, as the Secretary-General has said, that this escalation fuels the arguments of the extremists; it empowers their cause in an unacceptable manner. The political context necessary to put an end to this cycle of violence between Palestinians and Israelis has evolved favourably in recent days. There are some political events deserving of our support, since they provide the most visible reason to hope that the situation will evolve in the direction we all wish. We are referring,

first, to the outcome of the Arab Summit in Beirut, which has set out a vision for a definitive solution to the conflict. We are also referring to the role played by the "Quartet" and, in particular, to the political importance that we all attach to the activities of General Anthony Zinni, the Special Envoy of the United States. Thirdly, we would like to refer to the validity of the Mitchell and Tenet plans and the Council's recognition of them as possible solutions to the spiral of violence. Finally, we refer to resolution 1397 (2002), adopted on 12 March, which demonstrated that unity on the Security Council does indeed have a desirable impact.

Unfortunately, the positive developments in the political context have not been enough to halt the cycle of violence or to create conditions for security. That is why it is clear to us now that if we, as the Security Council and as responsible members of the international community, are not capable of protecting this political environment, we will be faced with an escalation of a magnitude we do not want to imagine.

We would like to join the other members of the Security Council and the Secretary-General in calling on the parties to completely cease and desist from all acts of violence and in calling in particular on Israel to respect the physical integrity of President Yasser Arafat and to withdraw from occupied territories, especially from Ramallah, thereby recognizing the political importance of the Palestinian Authority and of its leader as the valid interlocutor in finding a definitive solution to this conflict.

Our actions, individually and collectively, must contribute to strengthening the political environment to which I referred earlier and be part of a well-concerted international effort leading to a sustainable ceasefire and to the return of the parties to the negotiating table.

Mr. Aguilar Zinser (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico wishes to express it most vigorous rejection of and deep concern at the acts of violence and aggression of the last few days and hours, which have even further worsened the situation in the Middle East.

Security Council resolution 1397 (2002), adopted in this Chamber less than a month ago, is unambiguous. It demands of both parties the immediate cessation of all acts of violence, including any acts of terrorism, provocation, incitement and destruction. The Security Council's demand, along with many other appeals from the international community, have gone unheeded by the parties. This disregard is intolerable. Extremism has gained control of the situation. The suicidal acts of Palestinian militants in Netanya and Jerusalem, which have taken the lives of innocent Israeli civilians during Christian Easter and Jewish Passover, are, in the exact words of the Secretary-General, repugnant acts. Nothing can justify them.

Mexico believes in the cause of the Palestinian people and today reiterates that conviction. We are certain that history will accord a place to a Palestinian State, and we firmly believe, as resolution 1397 (2002) states, that such a Palestinian State and the State of Israel must and will be able to live side by side within secure and recognized borders. However, this vision cannot become reality by means of terrorism and aggression against innocent civilians, those same civilians with whom the Palestinians will have to live in peace.

Mexico also supports the right and demand of Israel to live within secure borders. We believe that secure borders are not fortified borders. They are not borders of hate, but of peace and understanding. Security must be understood and built in the Middle East by going well beyond military conceptions and measures. Nothing justifies Israel's disproportionate and sterile use of force and its siege of the civilian population and of the headquarters of the Palestinian National Authority. Israel is wrong, and there is irrefutable proof if it believes that peace can be achieved through fire — fire, as the Secretary-General has repeatedly said, for which the Israeli authorities and the Palestinian Authority bear equal responsibility.

The Palestinian Authority needs respect today more than ever, because it is with that entity that Israel will have to sign a peace agreement. The Palestinian Authority must, in turn efficiently and consistently prevent any further suicidal acts by Palestinian extremists and it must renounce violence. Israeli troops must not go any further. The reasonable course of action is for Israeli troops to withdraw from Palestinian cities, including Ramallah.

This has been reiterated again and again by the international community, but no one has yet responded to its civilizing appeal or paid heed to this or any resolution of the Security Council. Israelis and Palestinians alike are in contempt of and failing their peoples and the international community. Mexico therefore yet again joins the Secretary-General in his

calls on both sides to take measures of effective leadership to end the violence.

In this respect, Mexico firmly believes in the Tenet plan and considers that the recommendations in the Mitchell report provide a course of action that the parties can no longer delay in taking. In recent days, world public opinion has placed great hopes in the efforts of the United States Special Envoy to achieve a ceasefire and to relaunch the dialogue. Those efforts must not falter and cannot fail.

The summit meeting of the League of Arab States in Beirut, and in particular its endorsement of the Saudi initiative offering Israel a peaceful arrangement with its neighbours, have also revived hopes that the building of bridges of understanding between Arabs and Israelis has begun. We regret that these efforts have not been echoed by those most directly responsible for exercising leadership and acting wisely.

Only yesterday, President Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority expressed his acceptance of a ceasefire, but his words are not enough. Israel has in turn expressed its intention to seek peace, but its actions contradict its words. Both are locked into the logic of extreme violence, reprisals and intimidation. This is the logic of hatred, death and destruction. There is no exit to this logic; it is endless.

Both parties must make an effort to break this vicious cycle. One gesture of generosity, good sense or self-restraint could unleash a similar and concomitant gesture from the other. An olive branch from one side might flower into understanding. Someone has to take the first step; someone has to plant that seed.

The Security Council must take action. If resolution 1397 (2002) is to be effective, the Security Council must act with clarity and break through the deafness. The Council's hands must not be tied by a sterile debate of mutual recrimination or by a competition to identify the guiltiest party at any particular moment. The Security Council must proceed jointly and as one. Its actions must be directed towards exploring mechanisms that will make its resolutions effective and provide genuine and energetic support for those in the Middle East who seek peace.

Mr. Tafrov (Bulgaria) (*spoke in French*): As an associate member of the European Union, Bulgaria fully endorses the statement to be made by the Ambassador of Spain on behalf of the Union.

Less than a month ago, the Security Council adopted resolution 1397 (2002) with near unanimity. Great hopes were born at that time, which were followed by a certain initial decline in the violence in the Middle East and by some encouraging signs on the ground. I point to the resolute mission of General Zinni and of the efforts made by the European Union and other important stakeholders on the diplomatic scene in the Middle East. I also point, of course, to the Beirut summit, which endorsed the peace plan of Crown Prince Abdullah.

For the time being, however, it would seem that the enemies of peace have gained the upper hand. The terrorist attacks in the Israeli cities of Netanya and Jerusalem were victories for the extremists. Bulgaria strongly condemns these terrorist acts and reiterates its position of unequivocal condemnation of terrorism from any quarter and for any motive — political, economic or religious. As the Secretary-General said earlier in his outstanding statement, these are morally repugnant acts.

Bulgaria, while acknowledging Israel's right to respond to terror, appeals to it to show restraint in the current very difficult circumstances. We call on the Israeli authorities not to use violence and above all to respect the physical integrity and freedom of movement of Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, who, as the democratically elected leader of the Palestinian people, remains the interlocutor in any political process.

In these circumstances, the watchword for both sides must be "restraint", as previous speakers have urged. The Tenet plan and the recommendations of the Mitchell Committee point the way out of the current crisis. I would refer yet again to resolution 1397 (2002), which is not only outstanding for its endorsement of the vision of two States living in peace and security in the Middle East, but is also important for our Council, which has for so long been virtually unanimous on the question of the Middle East.

My delegation is prepared to continue to work towards the unity of the Council on the question of the Middle East, because unity alone can help to provide a lasting solution to the problems of that region.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The conflict between Israel and Palestine has escalated, and the situation there has deteriorated to an extremely dangerous degree. The Chinese Government has

expressed its deep concern and preoccupation in this regard. We condemn the suicidal acts against Israeli civilians; such acts of violence by a few individuals run counter to the aspirations of the Palestinian people for peace and to the efforts of the international community to promote peace in that region. Yet still more alarming are the massive military offensives by Israel against Palestinians, in which the compound of Chairman Arafat was attacked, his guards wounded and innocent Palestinian civilians killed. As some commentaries have pointed out, such actions are no different from a declaration of war against Palestine, which will bring very serious consequences.

The Secretary-General, Mr. Annan, also pointed out, very wisely, that destroying the Palestinian Authority will not bring peace; it will bring the region even closer to war. We oppose and condemn the barbaric aggression of Israel against Palestine and call on Israel to immediately stop its military actions and withdraw from the occupied Palestinian territories. Events have demonstrated time and again that countering violence with violence does not help but, rather, that it will lead to an escalation of tensions and fuel hatred between the two sides.

The Arab League summit, which has just concluded, adopted an Arab peace plan, inspired by the Saudi peace proposal for the Middle East, which has facilitated and contributed to the efforts aimed at peace in the region. The Chinese leader and the Chinese Government have expressed their appreciation and congratulations in that regard.

In his statement today, the Secretary-General said that the summit has created a new opening for peace. The international community — including, of course, Israel and Palestine — should take advantage of this new opportunity for peace in the Middle East and take practical steps to cooperate with all the peace initiatives. Given the present circumstances, the United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, should play a more active and effective role so as to prevent the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from escalating into a full-fledged confrontation. Peace must be restored to the region. Only through peace can Israel and Palestine live side by side. To this end, it is imperative to implement Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002) and the principle of land for peace.

We strongly appeal to Israel and Palestine to exercise the utmost restraint, immediately stop all acts of violence, return to the negotiating table and work with the international community to advance the momentum for peace in the Middle East.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): Cameroon would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on having convened this meeting of the Council on the situation in the Middle East, including the question of Palestine, at the request of the League of Arab States. We welcome the Secretary-General here today and once again commend his tireless efforts for peace in general and in the Middle East in particular. We thank him for his important statement, which was well-balanced and made points that were commensurate with what is at stake: peace, which has been greatly threatened in the Middle East. Cameroon shares his views.

On 12 March 2002, the Security Council, at the initiative of the United States, adopted resolution 1397 (2002). That was a historic resolution because of the fundamental provisions that it contained. It set out a vision of a region in which two States, Palestine and Israel, live side by side within secure and recognized, borders, with the immediate cessation of all acts of violence, including all acts of terror, provocation, incitement and destruction, and the implementation of the Tenet plan and the Mitchell report recommendations with the aim of resuming negotiations on a political settlement.

Cameroon fully supported that resolution, because its provisions were in keeping with what we have always believed. We pinned great hope on it, and we still do. The situation prevailing now on the ground, which has justified the convening of this meeting, could, unfortunafely, divert us from the spirit in which we had committed ourselves. This situation concerns and greatly saddens us, particularly because it has come about at a time when at the Beirut summit the League of Arab States was sending a strong signal to the peace process through the adoption of the plan proposed by Saudi Arabia.

Now all of our hopes have been dashed by the new cycle of violence and reprisal in the region. It is clear to Cameroon that terrorism cannot be accepted on any pretext. We wish to reaffirm here our condemnation of acts of terrorism, particularly those against innocent civilians. We must encourage both

sides to resume the path of negotiation towards a lasting peace.

In order to negotiate, there must be two; they must acknowledge, accept and respect each other. That is a necessary precondition, which prompts me to ask the following question. Are the measures of laying siege, the attacks and the actions that hamper the normal activities of the Palestinian Authority truly in keeping with the new momentum that we wish to see in the search for peace in the Middle East?

We must recall that peace in the Middle East means the creation of the Palestinian State and the recognition of Israel, its right to existence within secure, recognized borders. As Cameroon has always stressed, this means that all parties must strictly implement Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002). These put forward the immediate and strict application of the fundamental principle of land for peace.

These are the elements and conditions for a just and lasting peace.

That is why, in addition to the deterioration of the situation and because of it, the Security Council must, more than ever before, end its deafening silence and reaffirm forcefully, today, resolution 1397 (2002) and call for its implementation without delay. That is what the peoples of the United Nations who live in the Middle East expect of the Council.

Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I regret the fact that I must take the floor today, on Good Friday. In Arabic, Good Friday is called "Sad Friday", and it is a sad day for more than one reason: many Palestinians have been killed. The President of the Palestinian Authority has been attacked in his very headquarters; the compound has been destroyed.

The Security Council's immediate response to the request of the of the Arab Group — the convening of an emergency Council meeting to discuss the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question — bears witness to a concern over and a readiness to confront the acts of killing and destruction perpetrated by Israel against the Palestinian people. We hope that this meeting will give the Council a further opportunity to examine the wounds of the Palestinian people, because that people continues to spill its blood, as it has for more than 50 years. This problem did not crop up yesterday or today. The current suffering is the result of Israeli occupation and reflects only part of the general abuse perpetrated on the Palestinians by the State of Israel and its denial of their rights. We are not meeting to discuss the first act of aggression — it is another link in a long chain of terrorist practices carried out by Israel against the Palestinian people.

If the Council wishes to condemn terrorism, it must also condemn Israeli terrorism. That terrorism is the occupation of Palestinian land and repression of the Palestinians. Any debate in the Council on developments in the area that fails to examine the causes of the Middle East conflict — and I am referring to the Israeli policy of occupation, repression and assassination — would only encourage Mr. Sharon's terrorism. He would only see another opportunity to gain time and attack the Palestinian people in order to stifle its aspirations for freedom and independence, which are the same as those of any other occupied people before their liberation.

Those who refer to Sharon's willingness to find peace are speaking of a mirage or illusion. He has never tried to conceal his true intentions and policies, which are as clear as the nose on his face. Sharon has no intention of withdrawing from the occupied territory. He intends to continue colonizing the area, constructing settlements, confiscating Palestinian land and chasing the Palestinian people away from its land. As long as Sharon is able to do these things, he will persevere.

Sharon is the person who ordered the massacres in Sabra and Shatila and then led a provocative visit to Al-Haram al-Sharif. In addition, it was Sharon who, unable to kill the leadership of the Palestinians, yesterday ordered the attack on the Palestinian Authority and on the very person who had led the peace negotiations. Sharon has called for either Arafat's arrest or his death. In an interview yesterday, Arafat declared that if Sharon wanted to kill him, he was ready to be a martyr. Therefore, now Arafat himself is backed into a corner — and even he will be a martyr.

Today Sharon is conducting a policy of destruction and assassination — a policy of destroying Palestinian cities, villages and refugee camps. This is what we see on television and read about it in the press. To date, Sharon has killed 1,300 innocent Palestinians.

This constitutes genocide against the Palestinian people.

Yesterday, Sharon declared that Arafat was an enemy. What does "enemy" mean under international law? It means a person whom one can kill. These acts require the Council to condemn them, just as it has condemned the acts of other war criminals in other countries. The acts that Sharon has committed send a very unambiguous message and are a clear denial of the historic, enlightened resolutions adopted by Arab leaders at the Arab Summit in Beirut. Those resolutions are hardly one day old.

I believe there is a direct link between what has happened today, on Good Friday — this "Sad Friday" — and the resolutions that the Arab Summit adopted and presented to the world that they might serve to achieve lasting, comprehensive peace on the basis of international legality and Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978). Those resolutions elicited great international support — and this is Israel's response to the Arab initiative.

Now we must try to learn from and understand the true meaning and implications of these massacres of the Palestinian people. That people is being attacked by the Israeli army with the most sophisticated tanks available and by the Israeli air force and artillery; that army has not hesitated to destroy anything — old men, women, children, houses, farmland — in order to obliterate any trace of life.

Israeli terrorism against the Palestinian people is the most comprehensive form of terrorism we know. Arabs on the whole condemn terrorism. This unprecedented level of terrorism is the bloodiest type there is, and we deem it as our main task to ask the Council immediately to appeal for an end to these acts of Israeli barbarism if we truly want peace in the area.

The presence of tanks and cannons in Palestinian towns and villages is totally unjustifiable. It is therefore incumbent upon the Council to order Israel immediately and unconditionally to withdraw from these towns and villages.

The only guarantee of peace in the Middle East is the securing of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. Anyone who deems sound and rational the Israeli logic of achieving peace before security is wrong, because peace does not bring security; the contrary is true. When peace prevails, everyone feels secure, but occupation cannot give rise to peace.

The Syrian delegation reiterates the need for the Security Council to shoulder its responsibility under the Charter and to seize this opportunity to act, on the basis of the historic decisions and resolutions adopted by the Arab Summit, in order to preserve what remains of its prestige in the eyes of the world and of the Arab people in particular.

The very least that the Council can do is adopt a direct condemnation of Israeli policy and of its repressive measures, and call on Israel immediately to put an end to this policy, so that the international call for ending the occupation can be heeded and the established rights of the Palestinian people can be recognized.

Resolutions that do not make a clear distinction between the aggressor and the victim and that tolerate and justify the actions of the aggressor can lead only to greater devastation and suffering. This is the message we must all understand deeply. We must remind Israel that it must respect international humanitarian law, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention, in view of the attacks that have been perpetrated since yesterday. Indeed, victims are dying in the streets today. Ambulances are not allowed to help them or take them to hospitals.

In conclusion, the Council must demonstrate a genuine and sincere will to discharge its role and responsibility, in particular as regards Israel's occupation of Palestinian land, and compel Israel to withdraw from Palestinian and Syrian land, as well as from what remains of Lebanese territory since 4 June 1967.

We must not cooperate with Israeli policies that are hostile and destructive to peace.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Norway.

The peace process in the Middle East is facing its most serious crisis ever. Norway is extremely concerned about the dramatic escalation of violence in recent weeks and days. Present developments are threatening all of the achievements made since the Declaration of Principles was signed in 1993.

Norway strongly condemns the Palestinian terrorist attacks. There is no excuse for the killing of

innocent civilians. No society can live with suicide attacks and violence at the level we see at present. The Palestinian Authority must fight terrorism vigorously and dismantle the terrorist networks. Nothing less than a 100 per cent effort is acceptable.

The Israeli bombardment of Palestinian cities and institutions, which has led to death and destruction, is unacceptable. Norway strongly objects to the ongoing military operation against President Arafat's headquarters in Ramallah and urges Israel to put an immediate end to it. Norway fails to see how these attacks can contribute to greater security.

It is Norway's conviction that both parties must now adopt forceful and immediate measures to stop the escalating violence. These steps include the following.

The Palestinian Authority must do its utmost to halt Palestinian terrorist attacks. Continued terrorist attacks cannot be tolerated.

Ongoing military operations against President Arafat's headquarters in Ramallah must be halted.

Israel must stop its attacks on Palestinian infrastructure, stop incursions into area A and withdraw its armed forces.

A serious political dialogue must be resumed immediately with the aim of ending the Middle East conflict and establishing a viable Palestinian state alongside Israel within secure and recognized borders, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002), as well as the Oslo Accords.

The Tenet plan and the Mitchell recommendations must be implemented immediately and unconditionally.

Humanitarian and development assistance to the Palestinians must be increased to counter the increasingly difficult economic and social situation.

The international community, and indeed the Council, must stand united in its demand that these measures be implemented.

The Israeli and Palestinian leaders seem today locked in a battle with no exit strategies. This is untenable. The final responsibility for ending the hostilities remains with the parties themselves. At the same time, the Security Council must assist the parties in reaching this goal, building on the recent adoption of Security Council resolution 1397 (2002). Norway stands ready to make its contribution in this regard.

The aim of the Oslo process was to end the occupation and to create security for Israel. We can still achieve this goal, but only if a political process is started now. In this regard, Norway welcomes Crown Prince Abdullah's peace initiative.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Algeria. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Let me start by saying how pleased we are, Sir, to see you presiding over the Security Council, and to convey to you the satisfaction I am sure I share with all other Member States at the uniformly praiseworthy manner in which you have conducted the work of the Council this month.

Our gratitude goes also to the representative of Mexico, who presided over the Council last month with great talent and effectiveness.

The very day after the Beirut summit, at which Arab leaders offered Israel recognition and security in exchange for its withdrawal from the Arab territories occupied in 1967 and the establishment of a Palestinian State with its capital at Al-Quds — a bold and important gesture in every respect, which was rightly hailed by the whole international community because it could restore just and lasting peace to that tormented part of the world — Israel responded in the only language it knows and that it speaks in total scorn for international opinion: that of blind, brutal, disproportionate and unbridled violence.

As the Security Council is holding an emergency meeting at the request of Arab and Islamic States, dozens of tanks and thousands of Israeli soldiers are trooping through Ramallah — which is now besieged, cordoned off, cut off from the world and occupied — bringing death and destruction. The very headquarters of the Palestinian Authority, until now safe from the destructive madness of the Israeli forces, is now in ruins: tanks have penetrated to the very heart of Chairman Arafat's residence; Israeli forces have killed several of his aides and wounding dozens of others, and have arrested an unknown number of people.

The life of Chairman Arafat — the uncontested leader of the Palestinian people, the democratically elected President of the Palestinian Authority and the interlocutor who is essential to any negotiation — is now under grave threat; his freedom of movement has been reduced to the bare minimum. But his prestige and his moral authority among his people, who are rallying around him in this moment of adversity, are great than ever. Even as his offices are in flames, his infrastructure destroyed, his police force crushed, his communications cut, he is being required to curb the rage of a people living daily under occupation, repression and humiliation, and to control the legitimate uprising that is constantly fuelled by the unheard-of violence and the ever increasing repression.

The fact is that this new Israeli aggression is aimed at smashing the peace process set in motion at the Beirut summit on the false pretext of responding to acts caused by the acute frustration of a people that has lived under occupation for generations, at damaging the credibility of the Palestinian Authority, at breaking down its machinery and at making it unable to meet its obligations while continually demanding that it take drastic action against isolated acts of violence that nothing can either prevent or control with the few resources the Authority possesses and given the chaos, confusion and terror that prevail in the Palestinian territories.

Israel's scorched-earth policy aims ultimately at discrediting and disqualifying the very concept of a viable and responsible Palestinian State — which is the final goal of the peace process and which has been recognized and enshrined by the Security Council. The result of this negative policy is that today the Middle East is closer than ever to the brink of widespread confrontation. In view of this situation it is imperative for the international community to stop being a passive observer of the Middle East, which is awash in violence, and to shoulder its responsibility with courage and determination before the region lapses into total war with tragic consequences for all.

Here, the Security Council, given its special responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, must become directly involved by calling for an immediate cessation of the present Israeli aggression; by calling for the withdrawal of Israeli security forces from Ramallah and all other occupied Palestinian areas; by demanding the immediate lifting of the restrictions imposed on Chairman Arafat; by taking a decision on ways to provide the Palestinian people with the protection it is entitled to expect of the international community, including by deploying international observers; by urging Israel to respect the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949; and by calling for the complete implementation, as a matter of urgency, of the recommendations of the Mitchell report and the Tenet plan.

More than ever, Algeria is convinced that peace is a strategic choice and that there is no alternative to returning to the negotiating table; we remain strongly committed to a peaceful, just, lasting and comprehensive settlement, as formally proposed at the Arab summit just held at Beirut: a settlement based on international law as embodied in Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and on Israel's respect for its commitments under the peace process, in particular the principle of land for peace, agreed upon at Madrid, which would make possible the establishment of a Palestinian State with Al-Quds as its capital.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Barg (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): We are very pleased, Sir, to see you presiding over this important emergency meeting of the Security Council. We hope it will meet expectations and will be commensurate with the gravity of the events that have required its convening. My congratulations go to the friendly delegation of Mexico on the skill with which it guided the work of the Council last month.

The world is deeply concerned at the developments in Palestine since dawn today, especially at those in Ramallah, which has been completely taken over by Israeli forces, including the headquarters of the Palestinian Authority.

The Arab summit had just reaffirmed that peace is the strategic option chosen by the Arab people, and this is how Israel responded: with a terrorist Zionist tank and bulldozer attack against towns and villages and against the headquarters of the Palestinian Authority. This is not only an attack on the Palestinian people and on Mr. Arafat himself; it is also an attack on the successes and achievements of the Beirut Arab summit.

All that remains is the Israeli strategic option, which is war. This reflects the racist Zionist nature of that entity, which is built on destruction and deportation.

Today's direct attacks against President Arafat, the deployment of tanks at his headquarters and the large number of dead and injured among his aides and his guards prove that Mr. Sharon's policy continues to be based on aggression and that Mr. Sharon is ignoring all the appeals addressed to him by every country in the world. It is a policy that turns its back on international law. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya strongly condemns this criminal Zionist attack, which will lead to further bloodletting and to the killing of more innocents.

This is a patent example of State terrorism practised by the Zionist entity against the defenceless Palestinian people. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya reaffirms that the Security Council, the international community and the peoples of the world must strongly condemn this danger now threatening our entire region. Responsibility for this criminal behaviour lies with the Zionist entity, as well as with the Powers that enable it to practise its policy of death and destruction. There is blatant contempt for all humanitarian norms in these barbarous acts, and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya calls upon the Security Council to act in accordance with its responsibilities by declaring that the Palestinian question is a case of occupation first and foremost and that that occupation must end. Any other kind of decision is bound to fail, just as all the other agreements and understandings have failed, from Oslo to Camp David.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Egypt. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): My country, Egypt, feels a great deal of anger today over the arbitrary behaviour of the Israeli Government. That behaviour, if it reflects anything of any meaning, reflects the inability to perceive reality and that that Government's continuation of practices that have been rejected by the international community can only lead to further confrontation and violence and further loss of innocent lives on both the Palestinian and the Israeli sides. Today's military operations by the Israeli army against the Palestinian territories, and its occupation of the headquarters of the Palestinian President in Ramallah — which is the temporary Palestinian capital until its move to East Jerusalem — are acts that reflect the narrow vision of the Israeli leadership and its inability to understand a situation that its own actions and behaviour have created.

The real problem which Israel is trying to avoid dealing with is that the situation it now faces with the Palestinian people and its legitimate leadership is one in which a people is rejecting the continued occupation of its territory, cities and villages by armed force, and the Israeli Government perception that it can break the back of the national popular resistance of a heroic people against armed occupation through the blind use of brute armed force. That occupation by Israel and its settlers has been taking place since 5 June 1967. Israel's attacks and its blind use of armed force to terrorize and humiliate the Palestinian people and its leadership will be defeated by that heroic resistance and the steadfast, firm stand of the Palestinian people against foreign occupation.

The problem is one of occupation, and only occupation. That occupation is the cause of all the suffering of the Palestinian and the Israeli peoples. As I have previously made clear, Egypt condemns all acts of violence that lead to loss of life and civilian victims in Israeli cities. But we also condemn most firmly all these reckless operations, the blind use of force and the arrogance of using force against the Palestinian people and its legitimate leadership.

Egypt demands that the Security Council assume its responsibility under the Charter and that it send a clear message and vision that includes the following elements.

First, the Council should call on Israel to refrain from any attacks on the legitimate Palestinian leadership represented by President Arafat and his aides and assistants in any way. Secondly, the Council should demand that Israel immediately withdraw from all cities and territories it has entered and end all its recent measures.

Thirdly, the Council should call upon both parties to commit themselves to urgent implementation of the Tenet plan and the Mitchell recommendations, and to respond to all the efforts made by the parties concerned — foremost among which are those of the Secretary-General, the European Union, the Russian Federation, the United States and others — with a view to bringing acts of violence under control, ending armed confrontations and moving towards a negotiating process that will lead to a settlement. In

this regard, we cannot allow for a repetition of what has taken place before, namely, wasting time and manoeuvring in the same way as during the 10 years since the Madrid Conference.

Only yesterday the Arab nation presented an integrated and comprehensive vision of a just and final settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict that included the Palestinian question, which is the essence and cause of that conflict. Regrettably, Israel's answer was that of an arrogant Power. I would like to reiterate once again my country's conviction that the current armed action will not achieve for Israel and its people the security they seek. This attack will only complicate matters further and open the way for more reciprocal violence and loss of security for both parties.

The objective all parties must work to achieve must be to end Israeli occupation and to establish a Palestinian State with its capital in East Jerusalem, with equal security for both sides. Finally, there must be good-neighbourly relations between the two countries within secure and recognized borders. This is exactly what resolution 1397 (2002) called for, and we support all of its elements.

In spite of this, we reaffirm that as long as occupation remains, as long as there is a desire to continue the settlement activity and to rely on the policies of force and violence, this sad situation will continue to represent a sword of Damocles hanging over the region. This will continue until Israel reaches the same outcome as that recognized by all occupation forces throughout history: domination and occupation will not achieve security for the occupier, for its citizens or for the sons of the defenceless Palestinian people.

The President: The next speaker on my list is the representative of Qatar. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, at the outset, on behalf of the delegation of Qatar, the Chairman of the Ninth Islamic Summit of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), allow me to extend our sincere thanks for your prompt response to my Government's response to hold this important meeting in order to consider the tragic and serious developments in the Palestinian territories.

The Security Council is meeting today at one of the most critical stages of the Middle East peace process. Israeli military aggression against the Palestinian people, the targeting of the Chairman of its National Authority, violation of the sanctity of his headquarters, its bombardment, destruction and occupation, and violation of the sanctity of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem are all blatant violations of all international norms and instruments that could lead to serious repercussions for international peace and security. In this regard, Mr. President, I would like to hold your Council fully responsible for the present situation in the region.

Since that ominous visit by Mr. Sharon to the Al-Aqsa Mosque, we have sought by all peaceful means through the Council to put an end to these violations in order to preserve security in the region. We have warned of the repercussions of such actions. This was actually reaffirmed by the Ministerial Committee of the Ninth Islamic Summit at the Security Council on 27 November 2000.

When double standards are applied in Israel's case, it is tantamount to giving that Government the green light to do what it wishes. We are not questioning intentions, but the Council's unity should not be upheld at the expense of the blood of the Palestinian people and its Chairman, Mr. Arafat.

The Israeli Government is wrong if it believes that State terror practised against the Palestinian people will ensure its security. That kind of logic runs counter to the willingness to establish security and a just, comprehensive and lasting peace, as expressed by all Arab countries in the final document of the Arab Summit issued in Beirut two days ago in response to the initiative by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Abdullah ibn Abdul-Aziz Al Saud. This initiative received a positive response and was supported by different countries around the world. It was also considered by the Secretary-General in his statement before this Council as a historic step towards reaching a peaceful settlement to the conflict in the Middle East.

This is how Israel responds to the good intentions of the Arab Summit. This vicious attack runs counter to international legitimacy — the legitimacy that was asserted by this Council in resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). This legitimacy should bring security to Israel — security that the generals in the Israeli Government have failed to achieve for over 50 years. In this regard, we would like to address the wise amongst the Israeli people to use reason and good logic

in order to save the region from more bloodshed on both sides. Violence can only generate counter-violence.

The Security Council is called on to adopt effective resolutions that will preserve international security, since the region where we live is extremely important to all States. This fact is known to all. Any breach of security in the region would consequently affect the security of the whole world. Therefore, on behalf of the delegation of Qatar, Chairman of the Ninth Islamic Conference of the OIC, I would like to appeal to the Security Council to take the necessary measures to secure the following: first, the immediate withdrawal by all Israeli forces from the territories under the Palestinian Authority; secondly, the unconditional return to the negotiating table and immediate implementation of all agreements reached before, with a view to putting an end to Israeli occupation of all occupied Arab territories; and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Djibouti. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Olhaye (Djibouti): Mr. President, I thank you for calling this emergency Council meeting. I also welcome the timely and pertinent statement made by the Secretary-General. We find it forthright and visionary. We applaud his courage and his relentless efforts to achieve peace and stability in that troubled region.

Before the historic Arab League conference concluded its business, Israeli tanks were already at the gate of President Arafat's compound. Ironically, at the same time, Mr. Arafat was declaring an immediate and unconditional ceasefire. He was under intense pressure to make that declaration, and he did it. But what did he get in return? We all know by now what has transpired since then, and there is not the scantiest cause for optimism as things stand now.

No one condones violence, and we have consistently condemned attacks against civilian populations, be they Israeli or Palestinian. What is unacceptable, however, is to place squarely on the shoulders of Mr. Arafat the blame for all the actions of Palestinians, who are revolting against unbridled aggression, gross injustice and relentless brutality accumulated over the last three and a half decades of occupation.

The Palestinians are at a military disadvantage, and whatever they have achieved in the last decade by way of security infrastructure has been deliberately targeted and destroyed by Israeli air power and tanks. Yet this humiliated, embattled and disenfranchised leader, under complete siege, is required to deliver peace and to control his angry and frustrated people in order to abide by the dictates of Israel, the occupying Power. Where are the carrots? Thirty-seven years have elapsed since the occupation began, and the Palestinians are asked to continue being patient and not to lift a finger. Otherwise, they will be dealt with vigorously and mercilessly. That is the unfortunate dilemma that the Palestinians find themselves in today.

Mr. Sharon's Government has embarked upon what it calls "widespread actions" against Palestinians throughout their territory. This is a declaration of war unleashed against the people under occupation who lost all hope a long time ago in the absence of any credible strategy or sense of direction for peace. By negating the Oslo Peace Accords, which provided the only meaningful hope for necessary compromises towards peace in the Middle East, Mr. Sharon seems determined to bury the Palestinian aspirations for good and on his own terms.

One wonders about the meaning of the words emanating from Israel to the effect that it has decided on the absolute isolation of Yasser Arafat and intends not to physically harm him. What we see, read and hear is the complete opposite of these words: the battle raging this very moment in Mr. Arafat's own compound, the Palestinian symbol of nationhood, as well as the demolition and occupation of buildings in it, with an unknown number of casualties and prisoners taken, and the confinement of Mr. Arafat to almost a corner of the complex. This is indeed alarming. It is unjustified, illegal and in complete violation of all civilized norms and behaviour. After all, the Authority's facilities and infrastructure, particularly its seat of power, are supposed to be inviolable and out of bounds to any infringement or incursion.

We call on Israel to respect international norms, to desist from harming Mr. Arafat, to desist from any further aggression and to withdraw immediately from the Authority's headquarters.

This Council is called upon to move swiftly in order to bring about a ceasefire between these two peoples, in conformity with the solemn duty entrusted to it by the Charter of maintaining international peace and security. To do nothing in the current insane situation is to abdicate its primary responsibility under the Charter.

Israel has decided to replace the offer of peace, recognition, security and normal relations with arrogance, rejection, force and futility. We call on Israel to heed the merits of the Mitchell report and the Tenet plan, the tireless efforts of the Secretary-General and the sense of this Council. It is inconceivable that the international community will just stand by idly as this theatre of the absurd continues to unfold before our very eyes.

The President: The next speaker on my list is the representative of Spain. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Arias (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the European Union. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union — Bulgaria and Romania — and the associated country Turkey align themselves with this statement.

The European Union is extremely concerned at the grave crisis in the Middle East. In the Declaration of Barcelona of 16 March, the European Union reiterated its appeal to both parties to take effective and immediate action to halt the bloodshed. There is no military solution to this conflict. We said so in Barcelona and we will repeat it now. Peace and security can be achieved only through negotiation. To find a solution to the current situation, it is essential to address the security, political and economic aspects as inseparable and interdependent elements of a single process.

In light of the events which are taking place in the Palestinian territories, the European Union today issued a declaration condemning in the most categorical terms the terrorist attack perpetrated this morning in Jerusalem, reiterating its demand to the Palestinian Authority and to its President, Mr. Arafat, that they adopt all possible measures to stop the spiral of violence and to prevent the initiators and perpetrators of the terrorist attacks from going unpunished.

The European Union has also categorically condemned the brutal terrorist attack in Netanya last Wednesday. However, the legitimate fight of Israel against terrorism and the reaction to the brutal attacks must be compatible with an effective operating capacity of the Palestinian Authority and its President, the legitimate representatives of the Palestinian people.

Therefore, the European Union urges an end to the attack against the headquarters of the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah and calls for the immediate withdrawal of the Israeli Defence Forces from that city.

The European Union reiterates the need for an immediate application of a ceasefire that takes into account only the conditions already envisaged in the Tenet Plan and those expressed by the United States Special Envoy, Mr. Zinni, which should be the basis of an agreement without delay between the parties.

The resolution of the Arab League in Beirut is a solid basis for progress towards a political perspective for a fair and comprehensive peace in the region and the establishment of normal relations between Israel and the Arab world, safeguarding the security of all countries involved and offering them a future of stability and prosperity. A sound political perspective needs to be restored, and political and security measures must be implemented in parallel and in a mutually reinforcing way. In this regard, the European Union warmly welcomes the adoption of Security Council resolution 1397 (2002), which reflects the commitment of the international community. That resolution must be urgently implemented, in particular its demand for an immediate cessation of violence, including acts of terror, provocation, incitement and destruction; and its call for the Israeli and Palestinian sides and their leaders to cooperate in the implementation of the Tenet work plan and the Mitchell report recommendations with the aim of resuming negotiations on a political settlement.

The indiscriminate terrorist attacks today and over the past days and weeks that have killed innocent civilians must be condemned. As the legitimate authority, the Palestinian Authority bears the responsibility for fighting terrorism with all legitimate means at its disposal. It must do everything possible to put an end to terrorism, dismantle all terrorist networks, including Hamas and the Islamic Jihad, and arrest and prosecute the perpetrators of terrorist acts. Its capacity to do so must not be weakened.

Israel, notwithstanding its right to fight terrorism, must immediately withdraw its military forces from areas under the control of the Palestinian Authority, stop extra judicial executions, lift the closures and restrictions, freeze settlements and respect international law. Both parties must respect international humanitarian standards. The use of excessive force cannot be justified. The actions against medical and humanitarian institutions and personnel are absolutely unacceptable. They must be able to fully perform their functions.

Resolution 1397 (2002) also affirms the vision of a region in which two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders. The European Union fully shares this vision and its two-fold objective: the creation of a democratic, viable and independent State of Palestine, bringing to an end the occupation of 1967, and the right of Israel to live within safe and secure boundaries, guaranteed by the commitment of the international community, and in particular the Arab countries.

The European Union is determined to play its role, together with the parties, the countries in the region, the United States, the United Nations and Russia in the pursuit of a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the conflict. A solution based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002) and on the principles of the Madrid Conference, Oslo and subsequent agreements.

We remain particularly convinced that a third-party monitoring mechanism would help both parties to pursue their efforts to that end and we urge them to consider proposals to accept observers. The European Union and its member States are prepared to participate in such a mechanism.

The European Union recognizes and praises those who continue to work tirelessly for peace within the peace camps of Israeli and Palestinian society and supports the direct contacts and dialogue that both parties are conducting.

Following on its present effort, the European Union will make a substantial contribution to peace-building in the region with the aim of improving the living conditions of the Palestinian people, consolidating and supporting the Palestinian Authority, strengthening the economic basis of the future State of Palestine and promoting development and regional economic integration. In this perspective, the European Union stands ready to contribute to the reconstruction of the Palestinian economy as an integral part of regional development.

In conclusion, the European Union remains convinced that, in order to be durable, peace in the Middle East must be comprehensive.

The President: The next speaker on my list is the representative of Jordan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Hussein (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the Arab Group, I wish to thank you, Sir, for your concern and prompt response in holding this emergency meeting to consider the critical situation in the Middle East. We also welcome the Secretary-General.

As members know, the Arab Summit in Beirut recently adopted a new Arab initiative based on specific proposals made by His Royal Highness, the Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This historic initiative reflects the readiness of the League of Arab States and all its members to recognize the State of Israel and to establish normal relations with it in return for its complete withdrawal from occupied Arab territories; the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital; and recognition of the rights of all Palestinian civilians under international law. We fully believe in the great importance of this decision, which represents a unique and historic opportunity to solve the Palestinian problem and end the Arab-Israeli conflict in a just and comprehensive manner.

However, Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people and its leadership continues, especially in Ramallah. In this regard, we strongly condemn the recent Israeli actions against Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and consider them to be a serious threat to the security of the entire region that could lead to a total deterioration in the situation and loss of life. It is clear that this and other aggressions — such as the policy of assassination, the destruction of national institutions, homes and the infrastructure, collective detention, the security and economic blockade of Palestinian towns and villages and the killing of countless innocent Palestinian civilians — will not give Israel security. Furthermore, they represent a flagrant violation of the agreements signed between the two parties and of the norms of international humanitarian law and other international

norms and instruments. We condemn these unacceptable and unjustified acts. We also condemn the targeting and killing of civilians on both sides.

We urge the Security Council to assume its responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations by calling on Israel immediately and totally to withdraw from all the territories it has reoccupied and to uphold its commitments under the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Times of War.

We also call upon the Security Council to demand that Israel implement Security Council resolutions, in particular resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), with a view to putting an end to the Israeli occupation of all the occupied Arab territories and allowing the Palestinian people to establish their own State on all their national territory with Jerusalem as its capital.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Iraq. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Kadhe (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, on behalf of the delegation of Iraq, for having convened this emergency meeting of the Security Council. This meeting is being held under very difficult international circumstances resulting from the Zionist aggression against the Palestinian people and its historic leadership.

Once again, the Zionist entity is showing its true face. It is showing that it is a racist, terrorist and intrinsically Nazi entity. It is an entity which, because of its actions and behaviour, embodies the very concept of State terrorism. It continues to perpetuate acts that flout the most basic rules of international law and human rights, and carries out criminal acts of aggression against civilians living in the occupied Palestinian territories, shamelessly using missiles, tanks and aircraft against the heroic Palestinian people, who are fighting with their bare hands and whose hearts are the only shields they have to defend their honour and the integrity of their land.

The policy pursued by the Zionist entity seeks to demoralize the Palestinian people and destroy the very symbol of the Palestinian revolution, President Yasser Arafat. It is a policy that seeks to fulfil its territorial expansionist ambitions at the expense of the Palestinian people.

The Security Council is being severely tested again. Will it discharge its mandate? Will it be able to maintain international peace and security? Will the Council be able to carry out its mission as the representative of the States of the world in seeking to attain that goal?

Unfortunately, we have lost hope, because we know that the Council is dominated by the State that sponsors the Zionist entity — the State that continues to use its privileges in the Security Council to obstruct the adoption of resolutions by the Council or, at the very least, to urge the adoption of a resolutions that are weak and unjust and hardly act as a deterrent for the Zionist entity.

That entity continues to flout Security Council resolutions — and that is why the weakness of the Council vis-à-vis that entity is the decisive factor that has enabled it to continue its acts of aggression and to continue to violate international law and the Charter and to commit crimes against humanity. Such acts are war crimes, committed by the Zionist entity against the Palestinian people.

Will the international community be able to put an end to the disregard shown by this entity? Will it be able to prevent it from continuing to commit such ugly, inhuman crimes? We appeal to the Security Council, to the international community and to all freedom-loving people throughout the world to condemn those acts strongly and to use every measure available in order to force that entity to act in accordance with international *jus cogens* to ensure that it is forced to withdraw immediately from the occupied Palestinian towns and territories.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Cuba, India and Saudi Arabia, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Requeijo Gual (Cuba), Mr. Gopinathan (India) and

Mr. Shobokshi (Saudi Arabia) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this timely meeting on an important issue which is the focus of attention of the entire international community. I would also like to thank Mr. Kofi Annan for the sincere efforts that he has made over the past few months to address the situation.

This morning, the Israeli occupying army started another round of large-scale military operations involving ground troops, apache helicopters, tanks, armoured vehicles and so forth against Palestinian civilian areas and Mr. Arafat's headquarters, and caused both many human casualties and large-scale material damage. Earlier this month, the Israeli army staged another round of large-scale operations, which lasted several days and resulted in the death of more than 200 innocent civilians.

Such military operations are a form of collective punishment inflicted on civilians. They increase civilian casualties and make life even more difficult and precarious for the Palestinians, who were already subjected to bombing of civilian areas, assassinations, demolitions and daily humiliation, as well as severe physical and economic hardships.

Against this backdrop, and as the international community is condemning the latest massive invasion of Palestinian areas, it is disturbing that today some still align themselves with the aggressive, oppressing and occupying side.

The Israeli spokespersons' rejection of the latest peace initiative put forward by the Arab States once again clearly proves that peace is not on Israel's agenda. There should be no doubt that, by embarking on a large-scale invasion of civilian areas just a day after the Arab Summit, the Israelis clearly meant to signal their opposition to any serious effort towards peace. Yet we did not need to listen to their spokespersons to know about their inherent opposition to any peaceful solution. Their continued settlement activity since 1993 — including the building of 34 new settlements in the West Bank and Gaza over the last year alone, among other things — has spoken for itself. The ongoing uprising is clearly the result of Palestinian disappointment in the peace talks, which bore no fruit simply because, from the beginning, the Israelis never meant to cede anything to the Palestinians.

There is no escaping the fact that occupation lies at the origin of all the trouble and instability in the region, and the Israeli regime simply cannot continue to occupy Arab lands, be they Palestinian, Syrian or Lebanese, on the one hand, and hope to ensure security by resorting to repression and aggression on the other. So long as the illness that causes pain is not effectively and duly addressed, the pain persists.

After so much destruction and the loss of so many precious lives, the urgent question that the international community should tackle now is whether or not the Palestinians are entitled to the right of self-defence. Moreover, while the Security Council has thus far failed, for obvious reasons, to take any action to protect the defenceless Palestinians against Israeli State terrorism and the armed-to-the-teeth Israeli army, the question is also how and by what means they should defend themselves.

International public opinion is outraged at the atrocious ongoing military operations by Israeli troops against the Palestinians. Moreover, Israel's acts have already taken the Middle East region to the brink of all-out war and disaster, and there is a real fear that the flames of war will spread to the whole region. Therefore, there should be no doubt that the international community earnestly expects the Security Council seriously to live up to its Charter responsibility, effectively address the root causes of the conflict and deal appropriately with the crimes perpetrated by the Israeli regime.

The President: The next speaker on my list is the representative of Pakistan, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): We meet today in pain and grief over what is happening in Palestine. Only three weeks ago, the Security Council acted with courage and wisdom, reaffirming the vision of a lasting peace in the Middle East. That vision, unfortunately, has been blurred by the events of the past 24 hours, demonstrating how fragile and precarious the situation in that region has become.

Only yesterday, the Arab countries together gave the entire world a clarion call for peace in the Middle East with justice and dignity, and the best opportunity ever to move back from the brink of violence and destruction and find a way out of this tragic quagmire. The Beirut Declaration of the Arab League was a message of hope, sincerity and reconciliation. Today we are witnessing the response, in the form of intransigence and belligerence. The vestiges of hope for peace are being demolished underneath tank tracks.

Ramallah's smog has peace under siege. We are all seeing this on television screens. The headlines say, "Arafat Cornered". The fact is, it is peace and the international community that have been cornered. The headquarters of a people's elected leader are being systematically taken apart with violence and bloodshed. Is this the response the Beirut Declaration merits? The spirit of commitment and sincerity shown at Beirut has now been rebuffed amid the chaos of heavy gunfire.

The Palestinian issue is not confined to Ramallah. The recent incidents in the region are alarming and the loss of innocent lives shocking, but they are linked to a sense of injustice and desperation. After all, we must ask ourselves: why would high school girls, who have a bright future ahead of them, opt for these acts of desperation and sacrifice their lives? Why are the Palestinians, one after another, becoming suicidal? Why are we not trying to listen to their cries of anger and anguish? For what reason are other innocent people also losing their lives?

The loss of innocent life on one side or the other is the loss of humanity. Are we so caught up in the horror of these acts of desperation that we do not think of their underlying causes? Are we so blind that we do not see obvious reasons for what is happening? Not only is this a matter worthy of serious reflection; it calls for some soul-searching by all and for urgent action. The Council must act today, if not for its own credibility, at least for preventing the current crisis from erupting into a full-scale conflict or war.

Three weeks ago, the Secretary-General had appropriately surmised that — and these are his words — "we are nearing the edge of an abyss". Today, we are indeed at the edge of that abyss. If something is not done urgently to reverse the situation, the consequences will be unimaginable.

It is unfortunate that the present deterioration of the situation should have come about in the very month during which bold new initiatives were being launched and hopes for peace revived. Yesterday's Beirut declaration came only two weeks after historic Security Council resolution 1397 (2002), which affirmed the vision of a Palestinian state living side by side with Israel within secure and recognized borders. The resolution demanded an immediate cessation of all acts of violence in the region and the resumption of the peace process.

Resolution 1397 (2002) also welcomed the recent peace initiatives, including that of Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Abdullah. This is in addition to the efforts that the Secretary-General himself has been making to induce the parties, and, indeed, the international community, to move towards the path of peace. He has been acting as the conscience of this world body, if not that of the world itself. It is regrettable that such bold and imaginative initiatives for peace are being thwarted by the roar of tanks.

Over the last two years, there has been a pressing need for the resumption of negotiations. This need could not be more urgent now, especially in the light of the spiralling and escalating violence that has claimed hundreds of innocent lives. With the peace process derailed and violence spiralling out of control, never in the history of the Palestine crisis has the situation been so alarming and the need to respond more critical.

We have debated the issue of Palestine in this Chamber for well over half a century. It is one of two unresolved disputes — the other being the Kashmir issue — involving the destiny of peoples and their inalienable right of self-determination, with serious implications for world peace and security, which have been on the agenda of the Security Council all these years.

In both cases, there are Security Council resolutions which provide a framework for their implementation, and, unfortunately, in both cases the Council's resolutions remain on the shelf, unimplemented. While in the case of Kashmir, the unimplemented resolutions are decades old, ironically, resolution 1397 (2002) was passed only three weeks ago, and yet we have not moved an inch towards its implementation.

As these resolutions remain unimplemented, peace in both Kashmir and Palestine also remains

elusive, as ever. Violence continues to escalate, oppression continues unabated, and people — in both Kashmir and Palestine — continue to be deprived of their legitimate right of self-determination. While we have waited for this body to act and to implement its own resolutions, the situation has reached alarming proportions.

My Government has expressed its grave concern over the aggressive actions by Israel in surrounding and attacking President Arafat's Ramallah headquarters. The loss of life and injuries resulting from that action simply cannot be justified. Israel's reoccupation of Palestinian Authority territories constitutes a serious threat to regional peace and security and puts in jeopardy the efforts of the international community for the resumption of the peace process.

These and other recent Israeli actions are all the more provocative in view of the Arab League's declaration offering Israel peace, security and recognition in exchange for its complete withdrawal from the territories that it occupied in June 1967.

Pakistan calls upon the international community, and especially this body, which is charged with the maintenance of international peace and security, to urge Israel immediately to halt its attacks on the Palestinian Authority and resume peace negotiations.

Violence only begets violence. Force will not solve any problem. However, our objective should not be to achieve a ceasefire alone. Our objective is actually the attainment of a final peace settlement in the Middle East. The framework for that settlement already exists in all of the recent peace initiatives, in Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002), and in the Beirut declaration. Those who have the responsibility to maintain international peace, especially the Security Council, must therefore act, and act now, to realize this objective and save what remains of the hopes for a durable peace in the Middle East.

The President: The next speaker on my list is the representative of Tunisia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mejdoub (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, we wish to thank you very warmly for having responded to our request for this emergency meeting.

This meeting was made necessary by the situation prevailing in the occupied Palestinian territories, which have been reoccupied and where a full-fledged war has been unleashed against the Palestinian Authority and its leader, Chairman Arafat. Chairman Arafat is not only being held hostage but also is in danger of being killed by Israel's military, under the command of Prime Minister Sharon, who in the past has been notorious for his policy of oppression and deliberate attacks against civilians, including assassinations.

These large-scale attacks and the direct occupation of territories under Palestinian control demonstrate once again that Mr. Sharon's Government — which became more radicalized during the holding of the historic Arab Summit in Beirut — demonstrate that Israel refuses peace, as it did when the Arab States, meeting in Beirut, held out an offer of comprehensive peace which had elicited the support of the vast majority of States.

Since the Madrid Conference, we have known full well that Mr. Sharon is waiting for any Arab or international initiative that might lead to a just and comprehensive solution of the problem in the Middle East, so that he can sabotage it.

It was no coincidence that Mr. Sharon led a provocative mission to the Al-Aqsa Mosque in September 2000. Indeed, at that very time many peace initiatives were under way, and great strides were being made in the direction of peace.

The reoccupation of territories under Palestinian control is a policy that is tantamount to State terrorism. It is also a means of economically strangling the area. The policy of humiliation and targeted assassinations devised by the Sharon Government in order to deal with developments on the ground is the principal fuel for the mounting frustration and despair of the Palestinian people, who see that the prospects of an entire people have been dimmed.

To put an end to the threat looming as a result of the present situations, all Israeli forces must immediately withdraw from territories under Palestinian authority. The siege on President Yasser Arafat must be lifted immediately and unconditionally: in the eyes of the international community, he remains the very embodiment of the Palestinian people and their legitimate elected leader and representative.

Talks must begin to find a comprehensive solution to the security problem so that peace negotiations can resume. For some time the Palestinian side has demonstrated its wish to negotiate a political solution on the basis of agreed texts and existing arrangements and terms of reference. The Beirut summit aimed to put on the table a unified, comprehensive and clear-cut Arab initiative, consistent with international law, that would promote a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to these problems and would take account of the interests of all the parties.

In this extremely sensitive situation, Tunisia appeals yet again to all the members of the international community to shoulder their responsibility, to rise to the challenge in the occupied territories and to use their influence to put an end to the Israeli campaign of aggression against the Palestinian people. Tunisia reaffirms that international protection must be provided to the Palestinian people. All necessary measures must be taken as soon as possible to guarantee the personal safety of President Arafat, and the siege on him must be lifted. Israel must be compelled to respect international legality and comply with existing agreements. It must respond seriously and responsibly to the current Arab and international peace initiatives.

Tunisia appeals to the Security Council to address this extremely grave and urgent situation with firmness. We call upon the Security Council to seize the historic opportunity offered by the Beirut summit. We must ensure that Israel does not make us miss this rendezvous with history and this wonderful political opportunity.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Morocco. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Bennouna (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish at the outset to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting of the Security Council. We hail the ideas put forth by the Secretary-General in his statement to the Council.

The Security Council is meeting today in exceptional circumstances, imposed by the delicate and critical situation in the Middle East: I say "in the Middle East", not only in the occupied Palestinian territories.

The Council cannot meet today's Israeli actions with silence. For Israel, it was not enough to have besieged the Palestinian President for nearly four months; it was not enough to have prevented him from attending the Arab summit at Beirut: it has sent its tanks and its special forces to attack the headquarters and offices of the Palestinian President and in large part to destroy them. These acts of aggression against the symbol of resistance, the symbol of the Palestinian State, have unmasked the true face of the present Israeli Government. As Mr. Kofi Annan said at the beginning of this meeting, such an act "will not bring Israel closer to peace" (*supra*); it will bring the region closer to war.

These Israeli acts, just one day after Arab kings and other heads of State or Government offered a peace initiative framed by Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah, provide yet further proof of the Israeli Government's true intentions in its ongoing attempts to kill the Middle East peace process.

It has been more than a year since the Israeli Government began its methodical policy of creating a new de facto situation in the Middle East on the pretext of security for Israel. Israel has thus escalated its repression of the Palestinian population by blockading them and stifling them economically, by demolishing their homes and by occupying their cities. Even the refugee camps have not been spared. This took place without the Security Council adopting a single resolution to deter Israel.

Amidst all these events and all this frustration, the Council adopted its resolution 1397 (2002), which is the source of some hope. Morocco was among the first countries to welcome that resolution, in which we could discern a glimmer of hope that new life could be breathed into the peace process and that the cycle of violence in the Middle East could be ended. Subsequently, Arab kings and other heads of State or Government met at Beirut and sent a clear message of peace to the international community: the message was "land for peace", putting an end to the Israeli occupation of Arab territories. Instead of responding positively to the Arab initiative and choosing the path of peace, Israel sent its tanks and troops to commit a direct act of aggression targeting President Arafat.

The international community, and Arab and Islamic countries in particular, as well as all peace-loving peoples, look with hope to the Council to adopt

a resolution commensurate with the critical circumstances in the Middle East. We sincerely hope we will not be disappointed.

Everyone knows Morocco's position with regard to the Middle East. Likewise, everyone is aware of Morocco's efforts to establish a dialogue between the opposing sides in that region. That position is based on Morocco's conviction of the need to coexist and to solve disputes through dialogue and negotiation. Morocco has always been at the forefront of contributing to peace in the Middle East along with all those of good intention. But those efforts were successful only as long as Israel gave the impression that it wanted peace with its neighbours and that it was ready to pay the price for peace, namely, to recognize the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people and to withdraw from all Palestinian and Arab territories it occupied in the wake of the June 1967 war, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, in particular Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

I say with all frankness that we all feel pain at seeing innocent civilians — children and women — fall victim to violence, whatever its source. We are all hoping and working to put an end to such acts of violence. The Palestinian people — the besieged and suffocating Palestinian people, whose economy is being blockaded and stifled — have been pushed by the occupation and its practices into frustration and hopelessness. Recent months have shown that violence will not bring an end to violence and that military force and occupation cannot destroy the will of the Palestinian people to live and to achieve their legitimate rights.

The international community and world public opinion await concrete action and a courageous initiative that reflects a genuine will to end the cycle of violence. That must be done by the party with the largest military force in the region, namely, Israel. The international community is also waiting for all those of good intention who can influence events in the region to restore hope to the people in the region and to bring about peace. Morocco, as always, continues to be willing and ready to contribute very positively to that aim.

What we expect from the Security Council is that it demand that Israel stop its aggression immediately, withdraw from the Palestinian territories it has reoccupied, recommit itself to the Madrid principles and respond positively to the most recent Arab initiative. Finally, we should return to the negotiating table as soon as possible and demonstrate the necessary political will to bring about peace to the region.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Turkey. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Cengizer (Turkey): Turkey has aligned itself with the statement made by the representative of Spain on behalf of the European Union. That statement not only laid out the many questions that are currently at the forefront of Turkey's concerns, but also showed a sensible way out of the very worrisome and worsening situation in the Middle East. That being the case, I am taking the floor only to emphasize a number of points that are, from our perspective, of particular importance.

Before I take up those points, I wish to salute Secretary-General Kofi Annan and thank him for a historic speech that stressed hope at this very critical juncture. Indeed, we should find ways to penalize extremists rather than play into the hands of those who perpetrate acts of terror, and see to it that hope prevails over dismay.

Turkey is increasingly worried about this tragic cycle of violence. The suicide bombing in Netanya and the ensuing events followed the cold-blooded murder of a ranking Turkish member of the temporary international presence in Hebron and that of a Swiss member, while another Turkish member was wounded. We will not rest until a full investigation is completed and the perpetrators of this cowardly act are brought to justice.

We strongly condemn all acts of terror. We are horrified by the scenes of innocent civilians in baths of blood. We cannot think of any reason that can justify repeated brutal acts of violence perpetrated against innocent civilians.

This vicious cycle of violence and reprisal defines the immediate problem: there is no imperative more important and more urgent than the immediate cessation of all acts of violence. This is the cornerstone of Security Council resolution 1397 (2002), which was adopted only three weeks ago. It is all the more so if the vision of a region where two States will live side by side in peace is to be realized in good time.

Chairman Arafat's leadership is now more central than ever. He is the legitimate leader of the Palestinians; hence, he is the only interlocutor with Israel in the quest for a political settlement. After all, no one can imagine a military solution to this conflict.

As true friends of the glorious and historic Jewish and Arab nations and as witnesses to their great historic and defining moments, it is incumbent upon us, Mr. President, to ask where they are going and which way they wish to take. We have listened with dismay as Chairman Arafat talked of his wish to become a martyr. His becoming a martyr would not serve any purpose. Likewise, we do not see the purpose of the siege of his headquarters. Rather, he should be rendered the capacity to act as the leader of his people. Martyrdom in a headquarters under siege cannot be an end; it will curse generations to come. It is not acts of self-annihilation, but of statesmanship, that are required from both parties right now.

The representative of Israel declared a while ago that his Government had no intention of occupying territory under the control of the Palestinian Authority. He also said that the road to peace could be walked together. We welcome this statement. But, at the same time, Israel, when defending itself, should show restraint and listen to the calls made by the international community, as well as take into account the increased pace of the quest for a just and viable peace in the Middle East, most recently demonstrated by the Arab Summit in Beirut. As a matter of fact, every passing day shows the inherent value of both the Mitchell report and the Tenet plan. These should be implemented forthwith.

Turkey, as always, is ready to bring whatever contribution it can to ease the way to peace. Today, as was the case at other moments of destiny, there is cause for fear and abandonment — and there is cause for hope and courage. Once again, it is about the road to be taken. We believe both parties know which road they should take and how to strengthen their grip on hope. Today an Israeli and a Palestinian are born under the same star at the same hour. As Rabindranath Tagore has said, every newborn shows that God continues to believe in us.

The President: The next speaker on my list is the representative of Cuba. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Requeijo Gual (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, allow me, first of all, to convey my delegation's congratulations to you for the excellent manner in which you have guided the work of the Council during the month of March and to thank you for convening this meeting.

Once again the Security Council has to meet on an emergency basis in order to examine the deplorable consequences of a conflict that has lasted for several decades without any just and honourable solution being found to the satisfaction of all parties. The escalation of violence has reached unprecedented levels of danger in the dramatic and sorrowful history of this conflict.

Those of us who have been following the events of recent hours see a veritable nightmare that begs us to ask different questions. From virtual house arrest we have moved to armed aggression against the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. How much longer will the Security Council flagrantly shirk its responsibilities? How much longer will we be victims of paralysing vetoes or the threat of vetoes that prevent this organ, supposedly entrusted with carrying out functions clearly enshrined in the United Nations Charter as regards peacekeeping and international security, from taking immediate and emergency measures? In addition to the genocide that has been committed for so many years against an oppressed and occupied people, are we now to allow regicide to occur? The paralysis of the Council with respect to the question of Palestine and the Middle East in general is manifest not only when it fails to adopt resolutions that are urgently needed, but also when it fails to act to ensure compliance with those that it has already adopted.

The cycle of uncontrolled violence has reached unheard levels. We wonder how many more deaths there will be, how much more suffering and destruction before we put an end to this escalation of violence. Is it even possible? My delegation reiterates the need to establish a protection force or some other analogous, impartial mechanism that can protect the civilian population, observe the ceasefire and monitor the situation on the ground.

Cuba fully supports the heroic struggle of the Arab people, and the Palestinian people in particular, against Israel's occupation and aggression. We feel solidarity with their resistance and their rebellion. We reiterate our condemnation of all suicidal acts with

bombs or other acts against Israeli civilians, who become innocent victims of their Government's policy. We also reject the clumsy manipulation being made of these isolated acts in order to attempt to justify the disproportionate response by an army that is equipped and funded by the United States of America and that, with the most modern means, is trying to crush the spirit of rebellion of the heroic Palestinian people in its struggle to gain the exercise of its most legitimate rights.

Cuba demands full respect for the physical integrity and dignity of President Arafat. We demand the immediate and unconditional cessation of Israeli aggression against the headquarters of the Palestinian National Authority in Ramallah and the re-establishment of power and telecommunications service to the offices of President Arafat, whose example of valour and struggle have already found a page in history.

Presidential statements that solve nothing are not enough, nor are hollow commitments and new promises that are never kept. The Security Council must act decisively and firmly. It must discharge its obligations without delay or it will quite simply cloak itself in shame once again by virtue of its impotence.

The President: The next speaker on my list is the representative of Saudi Arabia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Shobokshi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for responding positively to the request for an emergency meeting of the Security Council to discuss the grave situation in the occupied Palestinian territories. It is a situation that is getting worse by the hour. Blood is being shed and innocent people are being killed. Hatred is deepening, and the problem is becoming more complicated. We are facing a very serious situation, which makes it imperative for the Security Council to intervene to stop the violence, destruction and killing, to call for an immediate withdrawal by Israeli forces from the Palestinian cities.

The Israeli troops going into Palestinian cities are not going to achieve security for Israel. It only reaffirms the true intentions behind the Israeli occupation and aggression, accompanied by the horror faced by the civilians. The killing of innocent victims and the demolition of installations will not solve the problem, nor stop the violence or counter-violence.

Previously, we reaffirmed before the Council that the Middle East question is not a security problem but an unjust, illegal occupation of Arab territories. Therefore, we cannot discuss the Middle East from a security perspective only. It has to be coupled with a political solution that will achieve a full withdrawal from all Arab territories occupied in 1967, in accordance with international law and Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and General Assembly resolution 194 (III).

The Arab Summit just held in Lebanon adopted the initiative of the Crown Prince Abdullah ibn Abdul-Aziz, an initiative that was welcomed by all countries and that offered a glimmer of hope and a practical solution to a conflict that is now more than half a century old. The Arab Summit affirmed the aspiration of all Arab countries to achieve peace and security for all the peoples and countries of the region, to live in friendship and as good neighbours, to establish normal relations after a full Israeli withdrawal from all Arab territories occupied in 1967, to establish an independent Palestinian State with its capital in Jerusalem, and to find a fair solution to the question of refugees in accordance with General Assembly resolution 194 (1948).

The Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia affirmed in his statement at the Arab summit that Israel is making a most serious mistake if it thinks that it can impose an unjust peace on the Arabs through force of arms. Peace is an agreement freely entered into between two equal parties. No peace based on oppression, suppression or injustice can endure. The peace process was based on the unambiguous principle of land for peace. This basis was accepted by the entire international community and was embodied in Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). It was adopted in the Madrid Conference of 1991, and it was affirmed by the Security Council in resolution 1397 (2002).

We call upon the Security Council to assume its responsibility in accordance with the United Nations Charter, to intervene to stop Israeli aggression, to put an end to violence and stop the bloodshed, and to create an atmosphere allowing the parties concerned to resume peace negotiations on all tracks. The Council must adopt a resolution that would stop all acts of aggression, lead to the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Palestinian cities, implement the Tenet plan and the Mitchell recommendations and reaffirm resolution 1397 (2002).

I would be remiss if I did not refer here to the efforts and good offices of the Secretary-General and the efforts by his representatives in the Middle East to help the parties concerned to stop acts of violence and resume peace negotiations.

The President: The next speaker on my list is the representative of India. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Gopinathan (India): Mr. President, we thank you for convening this emergency meeting of the Council. We also thank the Secretary-General for his statement to the Council today on the sharp deterioration of the situation in the Middle East.

We are meeting this evening in extraordinary circumstances. The Council expressed the collective will of the international community only a fortnight ago in resolution 1397 (2002), which outlined the vision of two States living in peace within secure borders. Only yesterday, the Summit of the Arab League States in Beirut adopted the resolution supporting the peace plan put forward by the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia. All of us thought that the push towards peace in the Middle East had acquired significant momentum through this action of the Arab League. Today, we seem to have moved far away from that vision. The needless escalation of violence in the region is unwarranted and is a cause of deepest concern.

We call for an end to the violence and for the resumption of peaceful dialogue and negotiations in order to realize the vision of two States living in peace within secure boundaries in accordance with resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and subsequent accords agreed to and accepted by the parties.

President Arafat continues to remain for all of us the embodiment of Palestinian nationhood. The way President Arafat is being treated is shocking. We do not see how the siege of President Arafat and today's military operations aimed at his headquarters can in any way contribute to the eventual cessation of violence or greater security.

My delegation reiterates our call for an end to the violence and the immediate resumption of dialogue and negotiations so as to achieve lasting peace and security for all in the region. We call upon the Council to express the collective will of the international community, once again in less than three weeks, for immediate resumption of such a dialogue.

The President: I now give the floor to the Permanent Observer of Palestine, who wishes to make a further brief statement.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): Very briefly, I wish to make one additional comment to be included in the records of our meeting.

We convey our official condolences to the Governments of Turkey and Switzerland on the deaths of two members of the Temporary International Presence in Hebron. Our condolences also go out to the families and colleagues of the victims. We greatly appreciate the efforts and work of all personnel of that group and we strongly condemn the killing of two of its members, which we firmly believe to have been committed by the Israeli army. However, the Palestinian Authority has openly declared its acceptance of an international investigation into this event and reiterates that position before the Council.

Once again, we extend our condolences on the deaths of the two members and of all innocent foreigners who have lost their lives, including the Italian journalist killed a few days ago.

The President: There are no further speakers remaining on my list.

The meeting was suspended at 10.55 p.m. on Friday, 29 March and resumed at 4.25 a.m. on Saturday, 30 March 2002.

The President: Members of the Council have before them document S/2002/333, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Norway.

I would like to state that it is the common understanding of the members of the Security Council that operative paragraph 1 does not indicate any sequence of the elements listed.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

Does any member of the Council wish to make a statement before the voting?

That does not seem to be the case.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bulgaria, Cameroon, China, Colombia, France, Guinea, Ireland, Mauritius, Mexico, Norway, Russian Federation, Singapore, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: There were 14 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted as resolution 1402 (2002).

[One member was not present during the vote (Syrian Arab Republic).]

Does any member of the Council wish to make a statement after the voting?

That does not seem to be the case.

I give the floor to the representative of Israel, who has asked to make a statement.

Mr. Lancry (Israel) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for giving me this renewed opportunity to take the floor. Consideration of the resolution that has just been adopted prompts us to make a few brief comments.

The reference to resolution 1397 (2002), in particular the appeal for an immediate ceasefire and for the implementation of the Tenet plan and the Mitchell recommendations, as well as, in this context, in-depth cooperation with General Zinni, are positive elements, and we therefore welcome them.

Having said that, I would like to add that appealing to Israel to withdraw from Ramallah and other Palestinian cities without an equivalent appeal to the Palestinian side to put an end to the suicide attacks and to destroy the terrorist infrastructure misrepresents the nature of the Israeli operation, which is one of legitimate self-defence. In so doing, the Security Council is rewarding the Palestinian terrorists. We condemn that; we cannot accept it.

Furthermore, the resolution in no way reflects the spirit and letter of resolution 1373 (2002), because — only 48 hours after the Easter massacre — there is not even a hint about the measures that must be taken by the Palestinian Authority to eradicate the terrorist networks. We deplore the fact that the issue has been handled in that manner.

In conclusion, I would like to restate the Israeli Government's willingness to cooperate with General Zinni in order to return, as soon as possible, to a ceasefire and to negotiation.

The President: I now give the floor to the Permanent Observer of Palestine.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): We would like to reiterate our thanks to the members of the Security Council for their prompt response to our invitation and the invitation of the Arab Group to consider the seriously deteriorating situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem. We would also like to reiterate our thanks to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his important and useful contributions to the work of the Security Council all day today. We would also like to express our appreciation for the seriousness with which the members of the Council considered the Arab draft that was submitted to the Council during the consultations on the various texts.

We believe that Council resolution 1402 (2002) represents an important step that could make a positive contribution to halting the deterioration of the situation and bringing about the desired objectives, particularly the Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian cities, including Ramallah. We had hoped for a stronger text than the one that has been adopted today. We had also hoped, of course, that events would take a different course. Nevertheless, the Palestinian side will abide by the provisions of the resolution, and calls upon Israel to declare a similar position, with a view to immediately implementing the provisions of the resolution. Regrettably, we have just listened to a negative position, although it is not new on the part of Israel. It is a position that constitutes a new challenge by the forces of occupation to your Council. I am afraid this position will impose on you additional measures if the Council is to perform its duty in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. At this moment, however, we will remain optimistic in the hope that the serious deterioration will come to an end and that we will truly see the implementation of the provisions of this resolution.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic) *(spoke in Arabic)*: We affirmed in our statement this afternoon that there was an Arab Summit that adopted a peace initiative to end the Arab-Israeli conflict and to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in accordance with the resolutions of international legality. We had great hope that the Council would start its resolutions in the wake of that initiative on the Middle East with a resolution that would take into consideration and include that historic Arab Summit resolution on achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive peace.

But it is clear that the resolution before us is only a repetition of resolution 1397 (2002), on which we abstained, while there is a resolution adopted by the Arab Summit that deals with the peace process as a whole. Consequently we thought that the Council would deal with that resolution if there was any real, serious intent to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the region.

The Arab Summit resolution has also affirmed the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital. Syria supported that initiative and the establishment of that State, as has been clarified by the Arab peace initiative. Therefore, we believe that dealing with this very serious issue in this manner and in such haste, without even giving us time to consult with our capitals, is not an example we should follow as a way of dealing with things in the Council.

It is clear that the resolution before us does not take into consideration the positive outcome of the Arab Summit. It is selective; it does not condemn the Israeli attacks against the Palestinian people, but it condemns the bombings. It links an immediate withdrawal of Israeli troops from Palestinian territories, even naming them "Palestinian cities", to a ceasefire. This means that a withdrawal cannot be effected until the Palestinian Authority has implemented a ceasefire. Consequently, the resolution again treats the victim and the criminal equally.

In addition, we do not find any condemnation of the Israeli terrorism in this resolution, about which we talked today in different ways and forms. In its operative paragraph 1 it calls for a "meaningful ceasefire", instead of asking Israel to withdraw immediately from occupied Arab territories.

We were hopeful that the Council would really — and we have made all efforts in that respect — keep its unity by not referring to resolution 1397 (2002), on which we have clarified our position completely and did not accept. This resolution does not fulfil even the minimum aspirations that we have; therefore it came out in very weak language. It does not achieve the aspirations of the Arab Group, and it does not help in dealing with the explosive situation in the region in a drastic manner.

Based on all these considerations, we did not take part in the voting on this draft resolution.

The President: The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 4.40 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.4504

Security Council

Distr.: General
2 April 2002

Original: English

Official communiqué of the 4504th (closed) meeting of the Security Council

Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 2 April 2002, at 4.30 p.m.

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record:

"At its 4504th meeting, held in private on 2 April 2002, the Security Council considered the item entitled "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question.

"The President, with the consent of the Council, invited the representative of Israel to participate in the discussion of the item without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

"The members of the Council and the representative of Israel had a constructive discussion."

02-31342 (E) 020402

United Nations S/PV.4505

Security Council

Distr.: General
2 April 2002

Original: English

Official communiqué of the 4505th (closed) meeting of the Security Council

Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 2 April 2002, at 7.20 p.m.

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record:

"At its 4505th meeting, held in private on 2 April 2002, the Security Council considered the item entitled 'The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question'.

"In accordance with the rules of procedure and the previous practice in this regard, the President, with the consent of the Council, invited the Permanent Observer of Palestine to participate in the discussion.

"The members of the Council and the Permanent Observer of Palestine had a constructive discussion."

02-31383 (E) 020402

United Nations S/PV.4506

Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4506th meeting

Wednesday, 3 April 2002, 10.30 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Lavrov	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Belinga-Eboutou
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	Colombia	Mr. Franco
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Guinea	Mr. Fall
	Ireland	Mr. Ryan
	Mauritius	Mr. Jingree
	Mexico	Ms. Lajous
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Singapore	Mr. Bhatia
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Negroponte

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

Letter dated 1 April 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/336)

Letter dated 2 April 2002 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/342)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

02-31389 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

Expression of thanks to the retiring President

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Ole Peter Kolby, Permanent Representative of Norway to the United Nations, for his work as President of the Security Council in March 2002. I am convinced that I speak for all members of the Security Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Kolby and his entire delegation for the great diplomatic skill with which the President conducted the business of the Council last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

Letter dated 1 April 2002 from the Permanent Representative of the Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/336)

Letter dated 2 April 2002 from the Permanent Representative of the South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/342)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Algeria, Bangladesh, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Egypt, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Mauritania, Namibia, Oman, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Lancry (Israel) took a seat at the Council table; Mr. Benmehidi (Algeria), Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh), Mr. Fonseca (Brazil), Mr. Valdés (Chile), Mr. Requeijo Gual (Cuba), Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt), Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran), Mr. Satoh (Japan), Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein (Jordan), Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait), Mr. Dorda (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia), Mr. Ould Deddach (Mauritania), Mr. Andjaba (Namibia), Mr. Al-Hinai (Oman), Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan), Mr. Shobokshi (Saudi Arabia), Mr. Kumalo (South Africa), Mr. Arias (Spain), Mr. Mejdoub (Tunisia), Mr. Cengizer (Turkey), Mr. Kuchinsky (Ukraine), Mr. Al-Shamsi (United Arab Emirates) and Mr. Al-Ashtal (Yemen) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 3 April 2002 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, which will be issued as document S/2002/343 and which reads as follows:

> "I have the honour to request that, in accordance with its previous practice, the Security Council invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations to participate in the meeting of the Security Council to be held today, Wednesday, 3 April 2002, regarding the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem."

I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to participate in the meeting in accordance with the Council's provisional rules of procedure and with previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 3 April 2002 from the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, which reads as follows:

> "In my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I have the

honour to request that I be invited to participate in the debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, under rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council."

On previous occasions, the Security Council has extended invitations to representatives of other United Nations bodies in connection with the consideration of matters on its agenda. In conformity with past practice in this matter, I propose that the Council extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The Security Council will now continue its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in response to requests contained in a letter dated 1 April 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, document S/2001/336, and in a letter dated 2 April 2002 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, document S/2002/342.

The first speaker inscribed on my list is the Permanent Observer of Palestine, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me, Sir, to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council and to express our personal pleasure at seeing you, the representative of the fraternal Russian Federation, in that position. We would also like to thank the Permanent Representative of Norway for the active role he played while presiding over the Council last month and for his full cooperation with us during his presidency, in the course of which Security Council resolution 1402 (2002) was adopted.

The Security Council is meeting today at the request of the Arab Group and of the Non-Aligned Caucus. We highly appreciate that request. We express our appreciation to all the members of the Council for their serious and immediate handling of the grave situation resulting from Israel's new, bloody act of aggression against the Palestinian people, the Palestinian Authority and President Yasser Arafat. We specifically appreciate the Council's quick adoption of its important resolution 1402 (2002) on 30 March.

Three days ago, Mr. Ariel Sharon delivered yet another insane statement to be added to other ominous statements, starting with that in which he rejected any final settlement of the Palestinian question, continuing with that in which expressed his regret that he had not killed Chairman Arafat years ago, and ending with that in which he said that the only remaining open road is that of inflicting the greatest number of casualties on the Palestinian people. Mr. Sharon spoke of war and war alone in that statement. It seemed as if he were determined to take all of us in the Middle East to the precipice. He rejected a ceasefire and once again categorized the only potential partner for peace on the Palestinian side as an enemy. Yesterday Mr. Sharon added yet another insolent and insane statement when he suggested that President Arafat could leave his country and homeland.

Alongside that statement, the Israeli occupation forces broadened the scope of their military attacks and aggression against our Palestinian people, which started six days ago. They reoccupied the cities of Qalqilya, Tulkarm, Beit Jala and Bethlehem, and today Jenin was added to the list. The Israeli forces continue, particularly in the city of Ramallah, to carry out heinous crimes, including war crimes and State terrorism. The Israeli occupation forces have killed many Palestinians, including five members of the Palestinian forces in an apartment three days ago; some of those killed had surrendered two days earlier. The occupation forces have shelled individuals and sites with heavy weaponry and helicopter gunships. They have attacked churches and hospitals and have prevented ambulances and medical teams from reaching their destinations.

In Bethlehem, the Israeli forces have imposed a military siege against the Church of the Nativity, where Christ, peace be upon Him, was born. Can Council members imagine that? Tanks surrounding the Church of the Nativity? God forbid that the world might be witnessing the devastation of the Church of the Nativity in addition to previous massacres, such as the carnage at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps.

The occupation forces have prevented any media presence in Ramallah. They have declared the city a closed military zone and have shot at journalists. They have shut off water and electricity throughout the city's

neighbourhoods and have imposed a curfew. They have broken into homes, rounding up men and youths and taking them to detention centres, where they are pressured, beaten and humiliated.

It is difficult for us to enumerate all the developments, taking into consideration the insane escalation caused by the Israeli forces. The Israeli forces have caused destruction in all our cities, which is escalating by the hour. We welcome the international community to a scene recalling Warsaw under Nazi occupation, or any other European city occupied by the army of Nazi Germany.

Furthermore, the Israeli occupation forces continue to occupy President Arafat's headquarters after destroying most of it. They continue to lay siege to the small office within the headquarters, they continue to shoot at the office and try to tighten their grip over it in every way. Once again, we strongly warn of the dangers inherent in these practices that threaten Mr. Arafat's personal safety. He is the symbol of the Palestinian national identity and of the Palestinian struggle for liberation and independence.

Certain Israelis have insolently declared that the Israeli military attacks will continue for weeks. That would take us to the point of no return. It should be rejected decisively by the international community. But frankly, this Israeli position reminds us, unfortunately, that influential international players have provided cover for the whole series of Sharonic positions. We hope this will end soon so that we can truly put an end to the tragedy and return to the path of peace.

Yesterday Mr. Sharon also attempted, along with many other Israeli officials, to link what Israel is doing against the Palestinian people with what the United States had done in Afghanistan. That is cheap political prostitution that exploits the suffering in the United States following 11 September and that erodes the legitimacy of the fight against international terrorism. Our position against all terrorist acts, including the bombings in Israel, is clear and explicit. We condemn them in their entirety.

But Israel remains an occupation force. It has occupied our land for more than 35 years, during which it turned the occupation into a colonial settler occupation in which it transferred hundreds of thousands of Israeli citizens to the occupied territories and built settlements on our land. Israel rejects our people's rights. It has worked against the realization of our right to self-determination and to the establishment of our independent State. Israel is the only occupying Power in the world. Israel is the country and the army that has committed war crimes and State terrorism. It is the State that continues to violate international law, international humanitarian law and relevant Security Council resolutions.

The main difference between what is occurring on the Israeli side and on the Palestinian side is that in the first case it is being carried out by a State army under Government orders, including war crimes and State terrorism, while in the second case it is being carried out by illegal groups that are condemned by the Palestinian Authority, which considers their acts to be against Palestinian national interests. That is the true picture. Failure to recognize this lacks ethical, political and legal validity; such a position can only seriously compromise the international community's task, including working to build peace throughout the world, and particularly waging the fight against terrorism.

Mr. Sharon's statement to which I referred earlier was his response to Security Council resolution 1402 (2002). We believe that, in the face of that response, the Security Council must seriously follow up on implementation of the resolution in order to ensure the immediate implementation of all its provisions. The immediate implementation of resolution 1402 (2002) is the only way to put an end to the rapid deterioration of the situation and to begin to get back on track.

In view of the fact that the resolution has not been implemented, the Arab Group has asked for the submission of a draft resolution demanding the immediate implementation of the provisions of resolution 1402 (2002). Some Council members have said that it is too early to adopt such a new resolution. For a people under siege there is no such thing as too early while the suffering, the siege and the humanitarian tragedy continue, along with their political repercussions. We appeal to the members of the Council to adopt such a draft resolution as soon as possible.

We are also convinced that following the implementation of resolution 1402 (2002), the Council must consider a way by which it can assist in moving things forward. There is no doubt that one of the means available would be the presence of an international third party on the ground to assist both parties in implementing the Tenet plan and the Mitchell

recommendations, advance the peace process and provide protection to the Palestinian people.

We would like once again to express our appreciation for the efforts made by the Secretary-General to end the ongoing tragedy and to get the situation back on the path to peace. We appreciate his initiative to meet with the Security Council, as well as the important statement he made to the Council. We are confident that the Secretary-General and his Personal Representative in the Middle East will continue their efforts in coordination with the Security Council. In this respect, we fully welcome the positions of the Secretary-General with regard to the immediate implementation of resolution 1402 (2002) and to an international third-party presence, as well as with regard for the need for a comprehensive approach that includes both the political and security dimensions. We call on the Security Council to respond positively and to adopt the same positions, which would truly lead to an end of the current tragic situation in the occupied territories and put the situation back on the road to peace.

I would like once again to thank all the members of the Council.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I think the Permanent Observer of Palestine for his kind words addressed to my delegation and my country.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Israel, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Lancry (Israel): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council, and to thank your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Norway, for his most able leadership.

The Council meets today at a critical moment for the peoples of the Middle East. In the past seven days there have been seven Palestinian suicide bombings in Israel, killing over 40 people and wounding well over 100. On our northern border, Hezbullah is attacking Israeli positions for the second day, following several weeks of escalating tensions in the area. Yesterday we met here in this Chamber and had a constructive discussion on how to address the current situation and on how we might best move forward. I appreciate the willingness of Council members to engage in a frank and open exchange of views in the spirit of dialogue.

We discussed resolution 1397 (2002), which Israel has fully accepted both in the vision it articulates and in the concrete steps it details. We have shown ourselves to be willing to fully implement this resolution, including the call for a genuine cessation of hostilities, terrorism and incitement and full implementation of the Tenet plan and the Mitchell report, and we had begun to take concrete steps in this direction prior to the Passover massacre last week, which led to the current deterioration. Indeed, every Israeli concession has been met with terrorism.

We also discussed resolution 1402 (2002), which Israel has not rejected. We recognize the positive elements of that resolution, namely, the call for a complete and meaningful ceasefire, which we firmly believe would lead to the withdrawal of Israeli troops. No one should doubt that when the violence and the terrorism have ended, so will the need for further Israeli military action. Indeed, the key elements of resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002) are themselves the elements of the Tenet and Mitchell plans, which Israel has accepted and continually shown itself willing to implement. We still await a reciprocal Palestinian response.

It is widely said that the obstacle to a ceasefire, from the Palestinian perspective, is the lack of a political horizon. But one need only look at the lengthy list of agreements that have been reached in the past decade, the Security Council resolutions that have been adopted and the broad international consensus — including among the Israeli people — that the Palestinians are entitled to establish their own independent State. The Mitchell report, permanent status negotiations on the basis of resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the vision of two States expressed in resolution 1397 (2002) — this is the political horizon. But let us be very clear: even when there was the clearest and brightest political horizon, the Palestinians did nothing to curb violence and terror. After Israel extended a far- reaching peace proposal at Camp David in July 2000, the Palestinian leadership launched a campaign of violence against us. And even as the sides met and considered further enhancements to Mr. Barak's peace offer, namely, in the discussions conducted at Taba, Palestinian violence and terrorism still threatened the lives of Israelis.

The international community must recognize that the Palestinians have made a strategic choice to engage in terrorism for the achievement of political objectives.

While they speak of a strategic choice for peace, their true strategic place itself is out on television every day, and to gruesome effect. In such an atmosphere, Israel has no choice but to exercise its right and duty under international law to defend ourselves. This is a right that any State would exercise under the conditions that we have been facing, and in fact, several States have already done so. No State would tolerate continued daily assaults — suicidal terrorism — on the streets of its cities. Israel will continue to do what it deems necessary to protect ourselves against the threat. We will act not to occupy, but to uproot the terrorist infrastructure, even as Palestinian gunmen use Holy Sites — including Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity — as a bunker, firing at Israeli soldiers from its windows and seeking refuge in its sanctuary, in violation of the most basic norms.

But make no mistake, our hand remains extended in peace. Our immediate objective remains the achievement of a ceasefire. And our ultimate goal is the conclusion of a comprehensive and final settlement of the conflict. If you do not believe this, I invite the Palestinians, with the Security Council as a witness, to put us to the test. Let us call for an immediate ceasefire and begin implementing Tenet and Mitchell. Let us discover what underlies Prime Minister Sharon's proposal as to painful compromises. Put us to the test of peace. It is that simple. Do not look for any ambiguous political horizon.

The Security Council has an opportunity to facilitate this process by adopting the draft resolution that will probably be submitted and which calls for an immediate implementation of resolution 1402 (2002). If the Council is to act in a spirit of responsibility and balance, it must include, beside the demand of an immediate implementation of resolution 1402 (2002), a call for the Palestinian side to cease immediately the suicide bombings in Israel. We believe that this not only would be a more fair and balanced position but could be the impetus needed to achieve a genuine ceasefire, begin the withdrawal of Israeli troops and ultimately put both parties back on the path towards the process of dialogue, negotiations and, hopefully, final status achievement in peaceful coexistence.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Israel for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Tunisia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mejdoub (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me, Sir, to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We hope that your work will be crowned with success. I would also like to thank the Ambassador of Norway for his excellent leadership of the Council during the previous month.

I would like to thank you sincerely, Sir, for your rapid response in convening this emergency meeting, which is taking place in the light of the dangerous deterioration of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, despite the recently adopted Security Council resolutions, namely resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002), the latter being adopted last Saturday.

Israel's immediate rejection of resolution 1402 (2002) and the dangerous escalation of the activities of the Israeli armed forces in the occupied Palestinian territories, as well as the continuation of the siege imposed on President Arafat's compound, represent a flagrant defiance of international law and international humanitarian law. They clearly demonstrate that the policy of the Government of Prime Minister Sharon is based on a rejection of the peace option and is an endeavour to abort any international or Arab initiative that could lead to a comprehensive and just settlement of the Middle East problem.

The fact that the Israeli Prime Minister has threatened to exile President Arafat from his country and homeland marks a new stage in the deterioration of the situation, revealing the genuine intentions of Prime Minister Sharon, who has flagrantly disregarded international law, international humanitarian law and the 1949 Geneva Convention. Those actions confirm that he is continuing his policy of physical elimination, that he is perpetrating war crimes punishable under international law and that he considers the reoccupied Palestinian territories as zones closed to journalists and the media. This is further evidence of Prime Minister Sharon's intentions, namely, the physical elimination and genocide of the unarmed Palestinian population.

We consider that Israel's persistence in pursuing such a futile policy and political adventurism not only is harmful to the civilian population but will also have serious repercussions for the Israelis themselves. In

fact, the excessive recourse to military force does not guarantee the security of Israel. It can, in fact, lead to further deterioration and to a flare-up in the region as a whole, thereby creating a clear threat to international peace and security.

In the light of this painful situation, we consider that there is no alternative to withdrawing all Israeli forces from all occupied Palestinian territories, the lifting of the siege imposed on President Arafat's compound and addressing immediately the security situation so that peace negotiations can be resumed.

The Arab States hope that the Security Council will now call for the immediate implementation of resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002) — as strongly called for by the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, during his meeting with the Council and in his presentation of his report — while recalling the need for the immediate application of operative paragraph 1 of resolution 1402 (2002) without any linkage, as called for by the Secretary-General and the previous Security Council President, the Ambassador of Norway. This should be done before a vote is taken on any resolution.

International protection for the Palestinian people has become one of the most urgent and overriding requirements because this is the only guarantee available thus far to halt the dangerous and very tragic escalation of violence.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Tunisia for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Ukraine. I invite him to take a seat at the Council and to make his statement.

Mr. Kuchinsky (Ukraine): I would like to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. I am confident that, under your able leadership, the Council will effectively address burning issues of peace and security, specifically the situation in the Middle East. My thanks also go to Ambassador Kolby of Norway and his delegation for the way in which they guided the Council during the month of March.

Ukraine is participating in this debate to express its deep concern about the extremely dangerous situation in the Middle East. Each time the Security Council considers this issue, it seems that the situation has already reached its most critical point and that common sense will guide the parties from the path of violence to the path of dialogue. Much to our regret, that logic has not been working in the Middle East, and violence continues to dominate over wisdom.

Ukraine has condemned in the strongest terms possible the recent terrorist acts in Israel, specifically those in Netanya, Jerusalem and Haifa. No one can justify the killing of innocent civilians. We call on the Palestinian leadership to take urgent and decisive action to prevent terrorist acts and to stop the activities of terrorist networks. They endanger the prospects for peace in the region and are not bringing the Palestinian people closer to the fulfilment of their legitimate aspiration to a Palestinian State.

However, one cannot realistically demand that the Palestinian Authority and its elected President, Yasser Arafat, fight terror while at the same time eliminating their ability to do so. Israel must stop the devastating raids into Palestinian-controlled territory, the excessive use of force and the attacks on heavily populated areas. Most immediately, we urge Israel to put an end to the siege of the headquarters of Yasser Arafat and to withdraw its forces from Ramallah and other Palestinian cities. The use of force will not bring security to Israel and its people.

Ukraine is confident that there can be no military solution to the conflict and that none of the problems that separate the Israeli and Palestinian peoples can be resolved by means of force and violence. It is necessary to look beyond the hatred and despair and to find, through negotiation, the political solution that will bring a comprehensive, just and lasting peace to the Middle East. To achieve that goal, both security and political efforts should be pursued in parallel.

Only last week, the Arab League summit adopted a historic decision on the initiative of Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, offering to establish normal relations with Israel and to provide security for all States in the region, in exchange for full Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied since 1967 and Israel's acceptance of a Palestinian State. On the eve of the summit, the Security Council adopted resolution 1397 (2002), which affirmed the vision of a region where two States — Israel and Palestine — live side by side within secure and recognized borders.

Ukraine welcomes both of those decisions; they restore a clear political perspective to the settlement

process and outline a concept of comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and on the principle of land for peace. The implementation of the Tenet work plan and the Mitchell committee recommendations would help negotiations to resume so as to make this vision a reality.

These positive and encouraging steps should not fall victim to the deadly explosion of shells. We urge the parties to seize this opportunity and to implement, unconditionally and without delay, the provisions of the most recent Security Council resolutions on the subject — resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1397 (2002) — in fulfilment of their commitments under the United Nations Charter. It is indeed unacceptable that the Council's decisions should be ignored at a time when, at last, the Council has become fully engaged in the settlement of the conflict.

Of particular importance is the need for the maximum mobilization and coordination of international diplomatic efforts aimed at breaking the deadlock in the crisis and resuming peace negotiations. It has become evident that the parties cannot achieve this on their own. The Security Council should continue to remain seized of the matter; in particular, it might return to consideration of a third-party mechanism.

We also welcome in this regard the ongoing efforts of General Zinni and the "quartet", and we consider the personal involvement of the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, in the process as a critically important factor. As an active participant in all of these efforts, Ukraine is ready to further contribute to this end.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Ukraine for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Egypt. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Security Council is holding an open debate for the second time in less than 96 hours in an attempt to find a way out of the tragic circumstances to which the people of Palestine are being subjected as a result of the continued Israeli acts of aggression inside the territories of the Palestinian Authority and inside the compound of its legitimately elected leadership.

Once again, we would like to reiterate that Israeli defiance — its refusal to implement Security Council resolutions, most recent among them resolution 1402 (2002) — will lead to further deterioration. The peace and security of the Israeli people, which Israel claims to be seeking, will not come about unless security for the Palestinian people is realized. Peace will not be achieved unless the Palestinian people obtain their rights in full.

What is required today of the Security Council is for it to reaffirm its earlier resolutions. The Council must call for an immediate Israeli withdrawal from the Palestinian territories, an immediate lifting of the siege imposed on Palestinian cities and an end to all forms of aggression against the Palestinian people and its legitimate leadership. The Israeli Government must realize that all aspects of its aggression against Palestine are doomed to failure, because the Palestinian people will stand up forcefully to such aggression and will continue its resistance to end Israeli occupation of its territories. The occupation is the origin of the problem. It must be ended immediately if the region is to enjoy stability and calm.

Many Israeli government officials speak of peace. They speak of a desire to live in peace with the Palestinians. They say that they are extending their hand in peace. These are claims that no one in his right mind can believe any longer, in the light of what we see clearly on our television screens. Israel is asking for a unique kind of peace: a peace built on attempts to subdue Palestinians so that they will accept the occupation of their territories, which are subjected to forcible settler colonization by terrorist elements for whom armed force is a way of life. Israel is asking for peace, but under conditions tantamount to transforming the Palestinian people into splinter groups living in isolated bantustans in the service of the Israeli economy and Israeli society, or into refugees exiled from their land or prisoners allowed to stay there under aggression and tyranny.

Those who speak of civilization and barbarism must learn from history that barbarism is, at best, the occupation of other people's territory, settler colonization and the killing or physical liquidation of those who resist or oppose. That is the true face of barbarism, which we thought we had left behind us 57

years ago. They speak of democracy and of the free world. They say they are part and parcel of democracy and of the free world. To them, I say that the free world does not occupy the territory of others by force and does not subject other peoples to occupation. True democracies do not occupy the territory of others and do not commit aggression against what is not rightfully theirs. Let them stop the lies, because they can no longer convince anyone.

The situation calls for a very conscientious and in-depth look at what is really required. Egypt calls for international action, through the Security Council, that would achieve a final and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. What is required for the attainment of that objective is an agreement on the necessary elements of any settlement. They are well known to all of us and can be summarized as follows: first, Israeli withdrawal from the Palestinian territories occupied since 5 June 1967; secondly, the establishment of an independent, sovereign Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital; thirdly, arrangements guaranteeing security for all parties on an equal footing in terms of rights and commitments; and fourthly, the establishment, after all withdrawals have been carried out, of comprehensive peaceful relations, good-neighbourly relations and constructive cooperation among the region's States and peoples on the basis I set out earlier — the Madrid formula of land for peace, endorsed by the international community and accepted by the parties. Or at least we thought they had been accepted by the parties.

The importance of those principles, as well as the need for them to be part of any settlement plan, must be reaffirmed. That would lead to a measure of confidence-building in this political process, which must be restarted after Israel's attempt to demolish it. This plan will lead us to negotiations on the details of such a just and comprehensive final settlement, whose elements we reviewed a moment ago.

Once again, I reiterate that Israel's continued occupation, acts of aggression, attempts at repression and failure to recognize the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent State on its land will only lead to further suffering by both Palestinians and Israelis. The forces of aggression, darkness and terror cannot be victorious. All involved must shoulder their responsibilities — primarily the States members of the Security Council, and in particular the permanent members. They all bear a special responsibility, and they cannot forget, or claim to have forgotten, it.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Spain, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Arias (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — the associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, and the European Free Trade Association country belonging to the European Economic Area Iceland align themselves with this statement.

Today the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the European Union are holding a special meeting in Luxembourg to discuss the tragic situation in the Middle East.

Since the Security Council public meeting that took place last Friday night, the situation of terror and violence on the ground has escalated further. The European Union is dismayed at this seemingly unending spiral of death, destruction, revenge and reprisal. We reiterate our urgent call on both sides to take immediate and effective action to stop the bloodshed. Terror and violence must stop. The Palestinian Authority and the Israeli Government must prove their leadership and assume their responsibilities with respect to their own peoples. Months and years of violence should have taught us that we cannot conceive of a military solution to this conflict.

We reiterate that there is no military solution to this conflict. The language and the logic of war have to stop and be replaced by dialogue and negotiation. Peace and security for both parties can be achieved only through negotiation. In this regard, it is essential to address and implement security, political and economic measures in parallel and simultaneously in a single process.

The European Union warmly welcomes the adoption of Security Council resolution 1402 (2002), which reflects the grave concern and the strong commitment of the international community. Resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002) must both be implemented immediately, in particular the demand for

an immediate cessation of violence, including acts of terror, provocation, incitement and destruction; the call for both parties to move immediately to a meaningful ceasefire; the call for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Palestinian cities, including Ramallah; and the call for the parties to cooperate fully with Special Envoy Zinni and others to implement the Tenet work plan and the Mitchell report's recommendations, with the aim of resuming negotiations on a political settlement.

The European Union wishes to recall the common understanding of the Security Council members that operative paragraph 1 of resolution 1402 (2002) does not indicate — I repeat, does not indicate — any sequence of the elements listed, as stated by the Council President.

The European Union condemns in the most categorical terms the latest terrorist attacks and reiterates its demands to the Palestinian Authority and to its President, Mr. Arafat, to adopt all possible measures to stop the cycle of violence, to dismantle all terrorist networks and to ensure that initiators and perpetrators of the attacks of recent days do not go unpunished. However, the legitimate fight of Israel against terrorism and its reaction to the brutal attacks also have to be compatible with the effective operating capacity of the Palestinian Authority and of its President, legitimate representatives of the Palestinian people. This capacity should in no way be weakened.

Therefore, the European Union urges an end to the occupation of the headquarters of the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah and to the isolation and restriction of movement of President Arafat, and calls for the immediate withdrawal of the Israeli Defence Forces from that city and from other areas under the control of the Palestinian Authority. Closures and other restrictions must be lifted immediately. There is nothing to be gained by destroying the Palestinian Authority. Peace cannot be achieved by ignoring or continually humiliating one's opponent, or simply hoping to destroy him.

Israel, notwithstanding its right to fight terrorism, must respect international law. The practice of extrajudicial killings is contrary to international law. The use of excessive force cannot be justified. The actions against medical and humanitarian institutions and personnel are absolutely unacceptable and contrary to United Nations conventions and international humanitarian law. Such personnel must be able to perform their functions fully. Both parties must respect international humanitarian standards and protect civilian lives.

The European Union welcomes the resolution adopted at the summit of the League of Arab States in Beirut, which could be a solid basis for progress towards a political perspective for a fair and comprehensive peace in the region and the establishment of normal relations between Israel and the Arab world, safeguarding the security of all countries involved and offering them a future of stability and prosperity.

The European Union is currently in close contact with the parties, the countries in the region, the United States, the United Nations and Russia. In order to break this cycle of unprecedented violence, the "quartet" of special envoys must be given full access to all parties to try to help them to achieve an immediate ceasefire. Diplomat and consular representatives must also have full access to their own citizens in the territories and be able to fully perform their tasks.

In the face of escalating violence and mutual distrust, the European Union remains convinced that an impartial monitoring mechanism is called for, and we urge the parties to accept observers. The European Union and its member States stand ready to participate in such a monitoring mechanism.

Israel needs recognition of its right to live in peace within secure boundaries guaranteed by the international community, in particular the Arab countries. At the same time the Palestinian people also need the recognition of their right to live in peace, in a democratic, viable and independent State of Palestine, bringing an end to the 1967 occupation. We reaffirm that a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the conflict must be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002) and on the principles of the Madrid Conference, of Oslo and subsequent agreements.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, we are very pleased to see you presiding over the Council this month, and we thank

you for having convened this timely public meeting on the grave situation in the Palestinian territories. My gratitude goes also to Ambassador Kolby of Norway for the praiseworthy manner in which he conducted the work of the Council last month.

The situation in the occupied Palestinian territories has continued to deteriorate since the Council last met on this issue. The bloody campaign against defenceless civilians in the occupied territories goes on unabated. Palestinians are trapped and besieged by Israeli tanks and other state-of-the-art weapons generously made available to the Israeli regime. All-out repression, excessive use of force, collective punishment against an entire people — a people that has been enclosed and humiliated — have thus far fuelled the endless cycle of violence and could engulf the entire Middle East region. Media reports indicating that food supplies and medicine are rapidly running out in the besieged towns are further cause for concern.

At a time when the plight of the Palestinians is the focus of the entire international community and when public opinion throughout the world finds the atrocities committed by the Israeli troops to be increasingly appalling, the Israeli regime, in order to conceal its crimes in the Palestinian territories, is increasingly taking on journalists who are struggling to cover the aggression and its serious impact on civilians. In so doing, Israeli troops curb and even deliberately fire upon reporters with a view to intimidating and dissuading them from carrying on their work. Moreover, hundreds of peace activists, mainly Europeans, as well as medical teams, are abused and fired upon.

Decades of struggle by the Palestinian people for their right to self-determination have clearly demonstrated that the repressive policy atrociously employed by the Zionists has thus far only hardened the resolve of the Palestinians. The intensity of resistance that the people under Israeli occupation are currently exhibiting is truly unprecedented in the past half-century. Evidently, it puts the occupiers on notice that, unless the aspirations of the Palestinians are realized and their rights restored, they should expect graver consequences by the day.

In the midst of the tragic events taking place in the course of the ongoing conflict, the international community must contemplate the reasons that prompt Palestinian teenagers and youngsters, who normally should be seeing a bright future ahead, to sacrifice their lives. It should be borne in mind that the exceptionality of the response demonstrates the exceptionally ruthless crimes committed against the Palestinian people over a very long period of time — crimes that, by any measure, are unprecedented, even in comparison to similar instances in the colonial era.

Undoubtedly, approaching the issue simplistically, playing the blame game and restoring repetitious and superficial rhetoric by evoking terrorism will, in this case, lead nowhere. Each time the Israelis bulldoze more Arab homes and each time they kill Palestinians and their hopes, they create more militants. This may go on and on forever. What is now unfolding in the Palestinian territories is a struggle for national liberation and the right of self-determination stolen from the Palestinian people for so long.

By refusing to withdraw from Palestinian towns, as stipulated in Security Council resolution 1402 (2002), and, contrarily, by strengthening its occupation, the Israeli regime is bluntly defying the will of the international community, represented by this Council. It is very unfortunate that those who stretch and baselessly interpret Council resolutions just to advance their narrow interests are now grasping at straws in flouting the letter and spirit of a clear-cut resolution.

There is no doubt that selective enforcement of the Council's resolutions has an adverse impact on the authority of the Council, thereby undermining the entire international security system. We urge the Council to heed the call of the international community, to live up to its Charter responsibility and to take further effective action to halt the ongoing bloody action against the Palestinian people. The Israeli act of taking advantage of the defencelessness of the Palestinians is repugnant and, if the Council does not act to put an end to it, more bloodshed may lie ahead.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Japan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Satoh (Japan): I found it very embarrassing here today to have to choose between the two seats —

one on the side of Israel and the other on the side of Palestine. I want to tell both my Palestinian and my Israeli colleagues that my sitting here today on this side does not mean anything more than sheer convenience. I cannot divide myself. I hope that the Security Council can find a way for us to sit in a more politically comfortable way in the future.

The Government of Japan is gravely concerned over the escalating violence and terror in Israel and the Palestinian autonomous territories, which include the series of terrorist attacks by Palestinian extremists and the military campaign into Palestinian cities by the Israeli Defence Forces.

We are particularly concerned over the killing of innocent civilians, which can never be justified. In the past six days alone, more than 80 Israelis and Palestinians have reportedly been killed and hundreds more injured. We extend our deep condolences and sympathies to all the victims and their families.

It is all the more deplorable that these events are occurring at a time when there are constructive developments for peace in the region. These include, first, the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 1397 (2002), which affirmed, for the first time, a vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, would live side by side and within secure and recognized borders; and secondly, the Arab peace initiative adopted at the Arab summit meeting, based on the proposal of Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia.

The Japanese Government condemns in the strongest terms all acts of terrorism aimed at innocent civilians. We have urged the Palestinian Authority at various levels to do its utmost to suppress extremists. Last Friday in Tokyo, Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi urged the Palestinian Authority, through the visiting Speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council, Mr. Abu Ala, to act immediately against those responsible for terrorist actions.

At the same time, the Government of Japan has urged the Israeli Government to exert maximum restraint. In a telephone conversation last Saturday, Foreign Minister Kawaguchi told the Israeli Foreign Minister, Mr. Shimon Peres, that the incursions into Palestinian cities by Israeli forces and putting the headquarters of Chairman Arafat under siege were not conducive to restoring calm to the situation. She also called for the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from Palestinian cities. It should be recalled that Mr. Arafat is the legitimate leader of the Palestinian people, elected through a democratic process.

The Security Council, with its recent resolution 1402 (2002), has once again sent a strong message to both parties to put an end to the escalation of violence and return to the negotiating table. The Government of Japan fully supports that resolution and requests the parties concerned to implement it without delay.

We also regard American engagement indispensable in order to break the impasse and bring the peace process back on track. In this context, the mission of General Zinni of the United States, who remains in the region to continue his mediation efforts, is of utmost importance. The Government of Japan appeals to both parties to respond positively to his efforts and to achieve a ceasefire agreement as soon as possible. To that end, it dispatched to the region its special envoy, Ambassador Hiroshi Shigeta, in order to support General Zinni's efforts. The Government of Japan is determined to extend all possible assistance to the efforts to improve the situation.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Yemen. I invite him to take the seat reserved for him at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Ashtal (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like at the outset to express my sincere congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. Also, I cannot fail to express our deep appreciation to Ambassador Kolby for his successful presidency of the Security Council last month. Allow me to pay tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan. His positions on the deteriorating situation in the Palestinian territories have been characterized by wisdom, courage and a sense of responsibility. Ever since he delivered his now famous statement before the Security Council on 21 February (*see S/PV.4474*), he has been placing before the international community positive views that contribute to a resolution of the current grave situation.

The explosive situation in the occupied Palestinian territory is increasingly dangerous. Since Israel decided to launch an extensive war against the Palestinians, we have been witnessing a genuine tragedy. Israeli tanks and warplanes attack Palestinian cities, while the headquarters compound of the elected Palestinian President, Yasser Arafat, is under total

siege, and he and his aides are being humiliated through the cutting of basic electricity and water services.

The Security Council is meeting today for three reasons. The first is that Israeli acts of aggression have expanded. The number of wounded and dead increases daily, and destruction continues as we speak. Secondly, Israeli aggression has widened to such an extent that it now threatens peace and security in the entire region. Thirdly, the Council is meeting because Israel refuses to accept resolution 1402 (2002). Even though Israel's representative today claimed that Israel accepts the resolution, it refuses to implement it because it calls for a ceasefire and a simultaneous withdrawal of Israeli forces from Palestinian cities. Furthermore, the resolution stresses that withdrawal from Palestinian cities, including Ramallah, must take place immediately. More than 96 hours later, the resolution remains a dead letter.

Instead, Israel has reinvaded other cities in a broad plan to reoccupy Palestinian territory. Israel is also attempting to undermine the Palestinian Authority and to destroy its infrastructure, including leadership installations, official buildings and other civilian installations.

Arab public opinion boils over as it watches television screens showing the criminal acts perpetrated by the Israeli army. We wish this Council could view those images in order to see the truth of the assassinations, the attacks on ambulances and other inhuman acts. Denunciation has not come just from the Arab world; it has come from many other world capitals, including in the form of large demonstrations.

We call on the Security Council to reaffirm resolution 1402 (2002), which calls for a withdrawal of Israeli troops from Ramallah and other Palestinian cities. We call on the Council also to take a decision reaffirming the need to deploy international peacekeeping forces and international observers to supervise the withdrawal and to separate the two parties, the Palestinians and the Israelis. The defenceless Palestinian people, under blatant Israeli attack, cannot defend itself because of the massive imbalance of military force. How can a Kalashnikov rifle face Merkava tanks or Apache helicopters?

The Republic of Yemen, through the positions taken by President Ali Abdullah Saleh as reflected in his statement at the Beirut Arab summit, has expressed the Yemeni people's solidarity with and support for the struggle of the Palestinian people in this dark hour, as it faces the barbarity of the heavily armed Israeli forces. As stated by President Saleh, we also stand in full solidarity with our brother Yasser Arafat, the elected President of the Palestinian people, who is now encircled by the Israeli occupation forces, as he stands steadfast defending his people and its dignity.

We urge the Council to take a strong stand to compel Israel to abide by resolution 1402 (2002) and the previous resolution on this matter, resolution 1379 (2001), and to withdraw from Palestinian towns and cities, including Ramallah, or, if Israel continues its rejection, to take the necessary measures under Chapter VII of the Charter.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Yemen for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Dorda (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, Mr. President, let me convey to you our greetings and express our appreciation for implementing the first part of rule 48 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council by enabling the international community, on whose behalf you work, to participate in the work of the Council. We truly appreciate that.

Secondly, let me say from the beginning that my statement will be directed to minds and to consciences. My statement will also be a record for future events and for history. Nothing continues eternally. God alone is eternal. We are born, we live, and we die. We are recording for future generations to see that words of truth were uttered in the Security Council when it seemed that right had no place to thrive on this planet. Might has become right, and it seems that there are no rights and no might whatsoever for any in this world at this particular time.

To describe history, for my statement to be directed to consciences and to record history, I would say the following.

First, throughout history — and I would challenge any person to come forward with any atlas or geographic map with the word Israel in any part of this

world — that name has never been applied to a single inch of land. The name Israel is the name of the prophet Jacob, and when God spoke to the Israelites he said, you sons of Jacob. Never in history or geography was there ever a State called Israel on Palestinian land.

Secondly, four countries were put forward as candidates for a Jewish homeland: Argentina; Uganda; Jabal Al-Akhdar in my country, Libya; and Palestine. So what rights exist in Argentina, Uganda, Jabal Al-Akhdar in Libya, or even Palestine?

Thirdly, we must differentiate between two things: nationalism or nationhood and religion. For me to worship God as a Muslim, following the word of Mohammed, does not mean that I am not Libyan. Golda Meir and Peres came from Byelorussia, their country. Being Jewish is a religious issue; it has nothing at all to do with nationality or nationhood. Sharon also was never Palestinian. Begin came from Poland; he was Polish. His homeland was Poland, not Palestine. Netanyahu is American. He is a New Yorker from Brooklyn, I believe.

If they have the right to settle in Palestine because Moses, may God bless his memory, was born there or received the word of God there, that argument would also apply to Christians. Jesus, may God bless His memory, was born in Palestine. The word of God came to Him in Palestine. If that argument can also be applied, then all Muslims, from Indonesia all the way to the United States of America, can also go and settle Mecca and Medina, in Saudi Arabia. Where does faith connect with nationalism or nationality? Palestine is for Palestinians — Muslims, Christians or Jews, the oriental Jews who have lived in Palestine.

Fourthly, there has been talk about peace. Let us review that. Our brothers, the Palestinians, were told: put your liberation efforts aside, sit at the negotiating table in a political process, and they went along that path. They went everywhere they could, from Oslo to Madrid to Wye River to Wye Plantation to Wye-I-do-not-know-where to Camp David to Sharm el-Sheikh. No stone was left unturned. So what happened? Did they obtain anything? Did the other party comply with its previously signed agreements? Not at all.

Look at the latest issue of *Time* magazine. At least it is not a Libyan magazine; I think you all know that. There is a map in it. I am sure that members have seen it. However, kindly look at it again. Members may note that what is left of the West Bank and Gaza Strip is now all settlements. All these places are settlements.

What will negotiation be about? The land already has been filled with colonial settlements. What will be returned to the Palestinians? Hundreds of villages and towns have been built on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip. What is to be returned? The land cannot be returned because it is now full of new settlers from the four corners of the globe. The Palestinians are deported, are exiled from their land. Those who have been exiled are prohibited from returning. Palestinians own the lands where the settlements were built. Their homes were destroyed, their farms were destroyed, and even the trees were bulldozed and uprooted.

What is left for the Palestinians? What are the Palestinians to build a State upon? After all that, the Palestinian who attempts to defend his home, honour, children, whose land is being usurped, whose home is being bulldozed, whose trees are being uprooted, is labelled a terrorist. Where is the logic in that? The terrorist who is now occupying is given the legitimate right to defend himself. What right? He is aggressing. He is killing. He is beating. He is occupying, and he is uprooting the trees of others. He is building settlements on that land. He brings in new settlers from all over the globe. That person has the right to defend settler colonialism? Where is the logic in that?

That is the very logic that has turned young boys and girls into martyrs who have decided to die in order to free their land and their own personal and family property. They do so in defence of their freedom. So have they become terrorists? That logic can be stood squarely on its head. This is a provocation to the world and to all free peoples. This is turning logic on its head. We thank them because they have unmasked Arab regimes even of the very fig leaf of that logic. We also thank them for having revitalized the Arab street.

I have previously said in both the Security Council and in the General Assembly that our region is pregnant and that no one can say whether the child to be born will be healthy or not. Most probably, the child will not be healthy. Legitimacy has now been bestowed upon all forces, whether religious, nationalist or otherwise. They have all been given the green light for change, including, most regrettably, religious extremist organizations. They have been given great legitimacy.

An Arab President is being detained and the very dignity of an Arab people is being raped and overrun

by tanks and bulldozers on its own land. The Arab peoples can therefore only step on the Arab regimes that are now kneeling in cowardice. In those circumstances the Council will be utterly helpless and able to do absolutely nothing because the will of the people in the streets of the Arab world will rage. This is a certainty; it is only a matter of time. However, those official Arab regimes, by kneeling before the facts, have given legitimacy to all those movements. What, then, is to be the solution?

The Security Council must deal with this issue as one of occupation, the last case of occupation in the world. The Council has an opportunity before it. Those of sound mind and logic have an opportunity to look into, consider and evaluate a solution — the same solution we saw in South Africa — if indeed there are those who are searching for peace and security in our region.

We know what is taking place. We know full well what will happen. We are therefore not speaking of decisions to be taken. We know what the balance of political power is in the world, in the United Nations and, most particularly, in the Security Council. Since 1990, the Security Council has been in a straightjacket. We therefore direct our statements to minds and consciences. We are recording these words for history.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Chile. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Valdés (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would first like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of April, and to thank you for having convened this meeting to discuss a conflict whose developments and specific implications are within the purview of the entire world. I should also like to thank the presidency of Norway for its excellent work last month.

Our country associates itself with the statement that will be made by Costa Rica later in the meeting on behalf of the countries of the Rio Group.

Chile vigorously condemns both the horrific suicide attacks against the civilian population of Israel and the military actions being taken against Palestinian cities at intolerable costs to their inhabitants. We also condemn the attack against the headquarters of President Yasser Arafat, the legitimate leader of the Palestinian people. We consider these events an affront to the civilized conscience of mankind and a threat to international peace and security. Chile joins in the overwhelming outcry of the international community resolutely denouncing and repudiating the spiral of violence and demanding its immediate cessation.

My country looks with concern and unease at the fact that the violence affecting us is moving dangerously and proportionately away from the efforts of the international community to achieve peace. The refusal of the parties to comply with Security Council resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002) has a serious impact on the credibility of the United Nations and its ability to act as an indispensable tool in the search for a solution to the conflict. It thus also has an impact on Member States and, accordingly, on our own ability to comply with the principles and objectives set out in the Charter in this regard.

As the Council has frequently indicated, only the implementation of the Tenet plan and the speedy realization of the measures contained in the Mitchell report can create avenues towards peace. However, my country understands that, in the light of the seriousness of the current situation, we must focus on creating a minimal degree of trust between the parties so that they can set aside rigidity and retaliation and immediately and simultaneously move forward towards implementing a real ceasefire and a withdrawal of Israeli forces from Palestinian cities, including Ramallah. We call upon the President of the Palestinian Authority to condemn terrorist acts and to call for a cessation of all violent action. For its part, the Government of Israel must put an end to the bellicose actions against the Palestinian Authority and people. That is the only responsible course of action.

Chile believes that those measures cannot be carried out without the presence of a third party in the field with a clear mandate bestowed by the Security Council to verify compliance with the provisions to be agreed once a ceasefire has been agreed. The Council must continue to do its utmost to promote this initiative, in keeping with the responsibility incumbent upon it with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Chile reiterates the fact that there must be a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East on the basis of resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397

(2002) and 1402 (2002), as well as the Madrid principles. Likewise, we would like to stress the essential role of the Palestinian Authority, which continues to be the legitimate and indispensable partner in the peace negotiations. We appeal for preserving the physical integrity and restoring the freedom of movement of its President. It is once again necessary to reiterate the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to establish an independent, viable and democratic State, and Israel's right to live within secure and internationally recognized borders.

Chile is proud to have large communities of Palestinian and Jewish citizens. For over a century they have made a rich contribution to our culture and development. That is why Chile is experiencing great sorrow at this conflict. We fervently wish that an end be put to the bloodshed in a thrice holy land. We hope that the Security Council, as a result of this debate, will adopt unanimous and decisive measures leading to the implementation of its resolutions in such a way as to strongly encourage the end of the occupation of Palestinian territories, as the only lasting solution to the conflict.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of South Africa. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): My delegation is pleased to see you, Mr. President, preside over this emergency meeting of the Security Council. We joined in calling for this meeting today in response to the full-scale military operations that are under way in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem. We would like to express our appreciation to the Council for scheduling the open debate during the day, when all Member States have an opportunity to express their views before the Council.

We also note with appreciation that the Security Council has taken a step in taking action on our suggestion that it consider meeting with Prime Minister Sharon and President Arafat by instead meeting with their representatives here in New York.

However, we believe that more may need to be done. We would like to remind the Council of the suggestion by some of the members of the Non-Aligned Movement that the Security Council visit the region to obtain a first-hand impression of events on the ground. A visit to Israel and Palestine by the Council at this time would be another signal that the international community is very concerned about the deteriorating situation.

The Non-Aligned Movement is concerned that Israel has for many years refused to comply with Security Council resolutions. This cannot be allowed to continue if the Council is to fulfil its role of maintaining peace and security. At some point this Council will have to stand up to all countries that do not obey its resolutions. We believe that this time is right now.

The Non-Aligned Movement has consistently maintained that there can be no military solution to the Middle East conflict and that occupation, settlement activities and collective punishment of the Palestinian people are the root causes of violence and insecurity in the region. In other words, the enemy in the Middle East is not President Arafat or the Palestinian Authority. The enemy in the Middle East is the lack of peace between Israel and Palestine.

We are therefore deeply distressed by the fact that the Israeli Government has chosen to respond to the symptoms of its own military occupation by using disproportionate lethal force, with a resulting escalation in conflict and tragic consequences for the civilian populations of both Palestine and Israel. Clearly, Israel's decision to destroy Palestinian infrastructure, to humiliate and humble Palestinian civilians and to threaten the life of the legitimate, elected and internationally recognized leader of the Palestinian people cannot be justified as acts of counter-terrorism or even self-defence.

Israel's militaristic approach is all the more inexplicable and inexcusable since it is taking place against a backdrop of renewed efforts by the international community to mediate a peaceful solution to the conflict. The Government of South Africa found it inexplicable that Israel saw fit to prevent President Arafat from travelling to Beirut to endorse and support the Saudi initiative. This action was short-sighted and provocative. It played directly into the hands of the extremists, whose sole goal was to prevent creation of the conditions that would allow the achievement of a ceasefire and promote movement towards a substantial dialogue on peace in line with the requirements of the Mitchell report.

It is also deeply troubling to the South African Government that at precisely the time when both the

Israeli and Palestinian leadership were engaged in discussions with General Zinni about establishing the conditions for the implementation of a ceasefire, extremists once again targeted Israeli civilians in attacks that left scores of dead and injured.

Israel's response to these killings was once again the same massive, predictable military escalation witnessed in the past, which sought to target President Arafat as an enemy, to destroy the Palestinian infrastructure and to try to humiliate and bludgeon the Palestinian people into submission.

Despite these setbacks, the United Nations Secretary-General, the Arab League, the Non-Aligned Movement, the European Union, the Russian Federation, the United States of America and others continue to intensify their efforts to encourage dialogue between the Palestinians and the Israelis. We therefore remain convinced that it is possible to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the crisis. However, the trauma, intense mistrust and fear generated by the current spasm of terrorist acts and military attacks will not be easily overcome, and a credible, multinational monitoring mechanism will be required on the ground to monitor the implementation of agreements between the two parties.

Through the adoption of resolution 1397 (2002), the Security Council has recognized the right of the Palestinian and Israeli peoples to exist side by side, in peace and security with their neighbours, in States of their own. The Council has also adopted resolution 1402 (2002), demanding the immediate cessation of violence and calling for the implementation of a meaningful ceasefire and the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Palestinian cities. The least we expect is for Israel to obey Security Council resolutions and to implement particularly resolution 1402 (2002).

In conclusion, please allow me to restate a fundamental truth: Israel's security cannot be achieved through the barrel of a gun. The current cycle of growing violence and the ever increasing death toll of innocent Israelis and Palestinians cannot be ended without a political solution.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of South Africa for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Saudi Arabia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Shobokshi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me first of all to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency for this month. We wish you every success in guiding the Council's deliberations to the desired outcome. I would like to thank you for responding so promptly to our request to convene an emergency meeting of the Security Council to discuss the grave situation in the occupied Palestinian territories. We would also like to thank the Permanent Representative of Norway and to congratulate him on the wisdom he showed during his presidency of the Council during the month of March.

The bloody events in occupied Palestine confirm what we have said before: Israel does not desire or seek peace. The current Prime Minister of Israel promised his country that he would bring about conditions of security there. He decided that peace would not bring about security for Israel, and therefore engaged in acts of inhumane oppression and aggression, affecting both the Palestinian people and its territory. He used every cheap trick he could, on the pretext of providing security and with the claim that he was fighting terrorism. Comparing the terrorism committed by Israel with the national Palestinian resistance further exemplifies the gross injustice that is being inflicted on a people seeking to liberate its lands, realize its rights and maintain its dignity and freedom.

The State terrorism committed by Israel is not being undertaken in self-defence or as a means of protecting its citizens. It is being undertaken as a means of protecting its occupation and of consecrating its usurpation of Palestinian territory. Israel has no legitimate right to be in the West Bank, East Jerusalem or the Gaza Strip — areas that it entered in the 1967 war and which it has never left. Palestinians, like any other people living under occupation, have a right — indeed, they are duty-bound — to liberate their land and recover their freedom.

In the face of the ugliness of the Israeli occupation and the carnage committed by its occupying forces, Israel is blaming the Palestinians. The Palestinians should not — Israel claims — have paid attention to occupation; they should have ignored the fact that heavy artillery was used against them. They should have forgotten the thousands of dead and

wounded. They should have forgotten about their property and their rights, which were usurped, and about their homeland, which was destroyed. The Palestinians should not have expressed any indignation; they should not have resisted. They should have enjoyed the bounties of Israeli occupation and the peace of indiscriminate killing; the security of physical liquidation, siege and starvation; the peace of tyranny and destruction. They should have enjoyed the peace represented by arsenals brimming with nuclear arms and other weapons of mass destruction, and the security brought about by pressure, threats and provocation — the peace of false promises; the unimplemented agreements; the fact that international legitimacy was ignored. They should have enjoyed the peace represented by the building of settlements — the peace of Palestinian parcels of land, created here and there, and under siege by Israelis.

The Palestinian people resorted to resistance after many long years of bitter frustration and lack of hope that justice and equity would come about through a peaceful settlement. Their objectives were not realized because of Israel's intransigence and prevarication, as well as of its failure to implement its commitments. The Palestinians had no option but to turn to the intifada and resistance when the Security Council failed to enforce the resolutions that it adopted and when it rejected the idea of sending international observers to the occupied Palestinian territories. Such observers, if not able to put an end to the situation, could at least have prevented its further deterioration.

What could the Palestinians do, now that they faced humiliation by day and by night? How could they act, given that the international community had turned a completely deaf ear to their rights and had failed to enforce respect for international legitimacy? What could that people do — the people who have been prevented from enjoying peace and stability and the most elementary requirements for a life in dignity, like that enjoyed by all other peoples? How could they face the policies of closure, siege, starvation and collective punishment?

Are the inhumane acts perpetrated by the occupation forces in keeping with the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention as they apply to occupied areas? After all that we have seen, heard and read in newspapers, on radio and on television, can we still wonder why the Palestinians have descended into such hopelessness and despair? The aggressive behaviour of the Israeli Government shows how far it has moved from dialogue and the language of peace, and how much it has resorted to war and destruction as a means of realizing its expansionist goals and policies.

The theory that Israeli might can stifle Palestinian demands is totally and utterly invalid. If Israel planned to turn its aggression into a war between victor and vanquished — a battle that ends up with the Palestinians raising the flag of surrender — it must remember that never in human history has a defenceless people surrendered to brute power, no matter how mighty or strong. The struggle of a people will be rewarded, as long as they stay the course and absorb the strikes of the occupier. The ability to stand is part of right and of justice. Just as other peoples under occupation have won their independence, God willing, the people of Palestine will win its independence, too.

The senseless acts of aggression in occupied Palestine highlight the tyranny of occupation. The Israeli leadership, which came to power under extremely grave and complicated circumstances, seeks to explode the situation in the region, to invert the balance of power and to ensure new faits accomplis before it agrees to sit down at the negotiating table to discuss a final settlement. Now that it has realized that it cannot achieve its ambitions through a process of peace and just settlement, it imagines that time will be in its favour. It imagines that the Palestinians will be forced to accept a new fait accompli because of the Security Council's hesitancy to enforce its resolutions and to send international observers to the occupied Palestinian territories — as it has done to other regions —and because of the fact that the international community has been satisfied simply to denounce the situation without taking measures to force Israel to respect international legitimacy.

That is a flawed vision, and flawed logic. If Israel has succeeded in pushing the Palestinians to despair, it has at the same time brought fear and insecurity upon itself from the Palestinian people, who have lost everything, including their hope of enjoying what other peoples enjoy: liberty, dignity, security and stability.

His Royal Highness, Crown Prince Abdullah Bin Abdul-Aziz, Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, presented an initiative to attain peace, security and stability for all the region's peoples. The Arab Summit adopted the initiative. That alone

confirms the Arabs' desire for peace and stability for all.

We expect that the Israeli people will not let another opportunity for peace go to waste. We would like the Israelis to bet on justice and fairness and to realize that security will not be achieved through aggression, but through understanding, mutual interests and cooperation.

We call on the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities and act swiftly to press Israel to implement the resolutions of international legitimacy; to immediately end its acts of aggression and lift its siege, without conditions, from the Palestinian people and Yasser Arafat, recognized as its elected leader by all the world's countries; and to withdraw at once from the occupied Palestinian territories, in accordance with the provisions of relevant Council resolutions.

We also call on the Council to deploy international observers and peacekeepers to supervise the Israeli withdrawal and disengage the Palestinian and Israeli parties. In addition, we call on Israel, the occupying Power, to respect the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and the Hague Agreement, as well as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Here, I should like to call attention to a statement by the Secretary-General concerning the Middle East, to the effect that the problem there has been the Israeli occupation, which has led to the undermining of security and to an increase in violence and terror in the region, not to speak of economic deprivation and suffering. These problems are interlinked as one problem, and any attempt to treat it as a problem of security alone will not solve it. We must address the security problem and the political issues at the same time so that we can revive hope among the Palestinian people for a better and more secure future.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Saudi Arabia for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Turkey, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Cengizer (Turkey): My delegation congratulates you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council and wishes you every success in that very important work. We also wish to express our appreciation of the excellent way in which Ambassador Ole Peter Kolby of Norway conducted the Council during the crucial previous term.

Turkey aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. It should be a sobering call on both parties to assume their responsibilities to their people and to most of the international community. The eruption of outright and dangerously escalating conflict in the Middle East continues unabated, and we are meeting for the second time within the space of not even 96 hours, testifying to the seriousness of the situation. Tragedy abounds; fear and foreboding spill throughout the region. Certainly, this situation is more dangerous than many can bring themselves to avow and is getting more out of hand by the hour. Not only are the Israelis and the Palestinians at the brink, but the whole region is exposed to wider dangers, and this at a time when the international community must deal with a number of other problems and problem areas of unprecedented scope and urgency.

The Middle East is important to the world. So many unsurpassed achievements and great faiths trace their origins to the heart of this region that no one can afford to have the false sense of comfort that a misplaced disinterestedness or an imaginary sense of control are apt to create.

The Middle East is important to Turkey, because it was in Anatolia and in the Middle East that we first met two ancient and cherished friends. It is because of the way in which these friendships have unfolded over nearly a millennium now that we are privileged to be within the fold and at the forefront of the great faiths and traditions of mankind. We have shared friendship, wisdom and timeless memories that we nurture today with the Jewish and Arab nations. Their well-being was important to us in the past; it is important today and will be so tomorrow.

That is precisely why the current situation is unbearable for us. We can accept neither suicide bombings, which are sheer and simple terror in one of its most frightening forms, nor aggression against the legitimate leader of the Palestinian people, President Arafat. Sadly, we are horrified by almost every scene that reaches us from that part of the world these days: civilians covered with blood, headquarters under a barrage of bombs and gunfire. We cannot bear to see this self-destruction.

The events of the past few days and the manner in which this situation is unfolding make clear that the parties cannot be left to their own devices and that the international community, particularly the United States, has a responsibility to intervene to draw the parties back to the negotiation process.

The way to bring the crucial element of negotiation back into the picture is to stand at a fair and equal distance from both parties. In fact, both we and the parties need that, because these rampant delusions about a militarily achieved solution are dangerous, not only to those who have them but also to the region as a whole. The entire geography is being dragged towards a major crisis that might lead to a collapse of stability in more than one sense of the word. Those are reasons enough for the United States, which had the principal role in all previous peace initiatives, not to pause in carrying out its responsibility. Its influence should be brought to bear on the prospects for a peaceful settlement.

Let me be clear on one point: we vehemently condemn the terror perpetrated through suicide bombings, and we fully share the agony of the Israeli people. There can be no plausible degree of terror nor any redeemable reason or understandable motives for it, and there can be no leniency with regard to it. All Palestinians and their leadership have the responsibility to do everything they can to prevent the recurrence of these acts of terror.

At the same time, we strongly protest the treatment to which President Arafat is being subjected by the Israeli Government. No one has the right to commit such disrespect towards a nation's elected leader and to dismantle and destroy its administrative apparatus and mechanisms. What other action, if not those, will push the Palestinian people to succumb to the pressure from the extremist fold? The majority of the Palestinian people keep their faith in peace. We need to safeguard that reality today more than ever, and we must find ways for it to prosper — not, of course, paving the way for the clouds of darkness that extremists wish to bring upon their people.

Security Council resolution 1402 (2002) must be implemented forthwith. Israeli troops must withdraw from Palestinian cities. The Palestinians' human rights are being violated and they urgently require humanitarian assistance. Everyone is asking about the true scale of the ambition behind this military campaign. The world is worried about the destabilization that the campaign is bent on producing.

We cannot bite our tongues while we watch both parties help each other commit suicide. Indeed, Turkey, aware of its historical and contemporary responsibilities, is determined to act in a way that befits our implacable friendship with all peoples of the region. As a matter of fact, the situation requires assistance from every quarter. We deem it essential to draw up a concrete plan that will end occupation, violence and terror. We think all the interested parties should act in a concerted manner to have an effect on developments in the region, on the basis of the Madrid and Oslo Agreements. Turkey is working creatively towards this end.

Turkey has always assumed a conciliatory role in the Middle East conflict. Our forebears achieved peace for no less than half a millennium in that region. For centuries, Turkey ensured that mutual respect and tolerance reigned among the adherents of the three great religions, who were divided into nearly 100 different nations and groups.

I must repeat: we cannot bear this sight of fighting and violence between those who are especially dear to us. As a nation that has traditionally had good relations with both Israel and Palestine, we ask them to let us help them. Better and more honourable prospects are not yet lost. The appeals of the international community, along with the sentiment of friends, are there to be received in good faith.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Turkey for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of the United Arab Emirates, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Shamsi (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, on behalf of the United Arab Emirates, it is my pleasure to congratulate you on your assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month and to express our wishes for all success in your task. Also, I cannot fail to express to your predecessor, the representative of Norway, our appreciation for his presidency last month.

I would also like to thank you and the Council members most sincerely for your prompt response by holding this important emergency meeting, which we

hope will reactivate the Council and its responsibilities vis-à-vis events in the Middle East region, where a war of extermination and practices of flagrant ethnic cleansing are being perpetrated by the Israeli Government against the defenceless Palestinian people and their historic leadership.

The Council is meeting again today under exceptionally grave circumstances imposed by images, shown daily on television screens since last Thursday from within Palestinian cities and villages, of human massacres, destruction, a war of extermination and acts of mass detention that have been perpetrated for over a year and a half. In spite of many international resolutions calling on Israel to lift the siege of the Palestinian cities and villages, to respect the Tenet ceasefire plan and the Mitchell recommendations, we are astonished at the Israeli Government's persistence. It has escalated its spiteful, aggressive campaign against the Palestinians, including a premeditated plan to reoccupy Palestinian cities, to destroy completely the Palestinian Authority headquarters and its national institutions, to kill or detain dozens of its employees, to lay siege and to isolate President Arafat and some of his aides. This is one of the most immoral political and legal acts we have witnessed since the creation of the United Nations.

Returning to history, we find that the war declared by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon some days ago against Palestinians and their besieged cities — which are closed to peace advocates, television cameras and international humanitarian organizations — is not new; it is merely an extension, a new episode in the series of criminal acts perpetrated by Sharon, who is known for his hatred of Arabs and Palestinians. How can the world explain the situation in Ramallah today, this tragic repetition of the siege against the Palestinian President, the massacres in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Beirut, events in Bethlehem, Qalqilya, Tulkarm, Jenin and other cities and Palestinian villages and refugee camps? Everybody knows what Sharon and his war machine are perpetrating today — the killing and execution of Palestinian civilians, particularly in Ramallah, where the streets and closed quarters are strewn with dozens of wounded and dead Palestinians, a city closed to ambulances and Red Crescent vehicles. Furthermore, the Israeli army has not stopped its siege or its sniping at anything that moves in the Palestinian cities, villages and refugee camps. Indeed, since last Friday it has cut electricity and water, food supplies and emergency services to defenceless people. It has invaded homes and destroyed hospitals and houses of worship. It has killed civilians under the pretext of pursuing wanted men.

The pretext of security and of fighting terrorism declared by the Sharon Government to justify its increasing violence against the Palestinian people and its plan to reoccupy their land cannot be believed by international public opinion, which every day is witnessing these war crimes against the Palestinian people and their national leadership perpetrated by tanks, warplanes, armoured personnel carriers and Israeli artillery. The international community and the Security Council, which have always condemned terrorism in the past and which have renounced colonialism and occupation in all forms, must differentiate immediately between State terrorism and war crimes perpetrated relentlessly, on a daily basis, by the Israeli army inside occupied Palestinian territory, and the legitimate struggle of the defenceless Palestinian people to lift this unjust occupation, to defend themselves, their properties and their aspirations to an independent State, with Jerusalem as its capital.

While reaffirming our solidarity with and full support for the fraternal Palestinian people and its courageous leadership, we call on the Security Council and all States of influence, particularly the United States of America and the European Union member States, to shoulder their political, legal and moral responsibility vis-à-vis the question of Palestine and the grave developments there. These should include the following measures.

First is the strongest possible rejection and condemnation of these war crimes and Israeli terrorism so that Israel does not misunderstand the message of the international community, as enshrined in Security Council resolutions, particularly the most recent one, resolution 1402 (2202), calling for a withdrawal from all Palestinian territories that were reoccupied in violation of previous agreements — the Oslo Agreement in particular — and other relevant international resolutions.

Secondly, we must demand an immediate and unconditional Israeli withdrawal, which must also mean lifting the siege against the President of the Palestinian Authority, Yasser Arafat, as the legitimate

elected leader of the Palestinian people, and the release of thousands of Palestinian detainees. Thirdly, the dispatch of international observers from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, human rights organizations and international emergency aid organizations in order to protect the Palestinian people and ensure provision of food, medicine and humanitarian assistance to the thousands of displaced persons and to identify those Israeli war criminals who have killed hundreds of people, including women and children.

Fourthly, Israel must be compelled to pay adequate compensation for the grave damage to the Palestinian infrastructure and property of defenceless Palestinian civilians. Fifthly, we must promote and strengthen the role of the "quartet" of the United States of America, the European Union, the Russian Federation and the United Nations, based on evenhandedness and transparency in order to help the two parties — the Palestinians and the Israelis — to implement the Tenet plan and the Mitchell recommendations and to resume dialogue and peace negotiations from the point at which they stopped in the year 2000.

Sixthly, we must support and adopt the historic peace initiative of the Arab leaders at the Beirut summit as the strategic basis for a comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian question and the Arab-Israeli dispute, including a just and comprehensive peace based on international legitimacy and the relevant United Nations resolutions, including General Assembly resolution 181 (II) and Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002), and the principle of land for peace.

In looking forward to the declaration in the near future of the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, with Jerusalem as its capital, as a fundamental reason to strive for a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East, we express the hope that the international community will provide urgently needed financial, economic and humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people in order to heal their wounds and to allow them to rebuild the towns, villages and economic and social infrastructures that have regrettably been destroyed by Sharon and his accomplices in war crimes.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of the United Arab Emirates for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Malaysia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): My delegation wishes to thank you, Sir, at this early stage of your presidency, for convening this urgent meeting of the Security Council to consider the grave situation in Palestine. We associate ourselves fully with the statement made by Ambassador Kumalo of South Africa as Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement. We are grateful to Ambassador Al-Kidwa of Palestine for updating us on the latest developments and for his very restrained remarks, in spite of the provocation on the ground. It must have been extremely difficult for him to do so.

The entire world watches with utter consternation and disbelief the blatant and ruthless actions taken by Israel to intimidate, terrorize and subdue the Palestinian people and their leadership. Day and night, through its overwhelming military might, Israel has unleashed a reign of terror — for that is what it is — against the Palestinian people. I am therefore not at all embarrassed to sit where I am. It is at least a symbolic support for the people of Palestine at this critical time.

With the all-out military onslaught mounted by the Israeli armed forces against Palestinian towns and cities and the siege being laid to the headquarters of President Yasser Arafat in Ramallah, the intent of the Israeli Government has become crystal clear. Indeed, the Israeli Government has made no bones about its real intention. Its objective, carried out in the name of destroying the so-called "infrastructure of terrorism", is actually to dismember and dismantle the infrastructure of the Palestinian National Authority and to cripple and render impotent its leadership. In doing so, it is destroying the very foundations of political dialogue between the two sides that had been painstakingly laid down and built upon through the Madrid and Oslo processes. By isolating President Arafat and rendering him "irrelevant" — that is the word that has been used — the Israeli Government is tearing up all the agreements, accords and understandings arrived at between the two sides since the beginning of the peace process. This is insanity and it must be stopped. The Israeli Government must be told in no uncertain terms that there can be no military "solution" to the problem,

as no military might, however overwhelming, can ever vanquish the will and determination of the Palestinian people to establish an independent and sovereign State in their homeland. If there is just one lesson that Israel should have learned throughout this entire tragic conflict in the Middle East, it is that lesson.

The situation in Palestine is a matter of grave concern to the international community, but especially to the Islamic countries. In this regard, my delegation wishes to draw the Council's attention to the statement issued by the foreign ministers of the States members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) at their current meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. While the special ministerial meeting of the OIC was convened for the specific purpose of dealing with the issue of the global campaign against international terrorism and the role of Islamic countries in that campaign, the ministers found it necessary to pronounce themselves on the situation in Palestine. This statement will be formally communicated to the President of the Security Council very shortly by Mali, as the current chairman of the OIC foreign ministers, but, as the host of that meeting, Malaysia deems it appropriate to highlight at this important meeting of the Council the salient points of that statement, which are as follows.

The Conference strongly condemns Israel's recent storming of Palestinian cities and villages, as well as the headquarters of the Palestinian presidency, and its endangering the life of President Arafat and other Palestinian leaders. The Conference considers this assault a violation of all international norms and laws and the culmination of State terrorism practised by Israel.

The Conference requests the Security Council, the two sponsors of the peace process and the European Union to assume their responsibility to immediately stop the Israeli aggression and effect the withdrawal of Israeli troops from all occupied Arab and Palestinian territories.

The Conference reaffirms the continuing support of the Islamic States for the Palestinian people's struggle against Israeli occupation and for the restoration of their inalienable national rights, including the right of return for refugees and the right to self-determination and to establish their sovereign State, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

While condemning Israel's practice of State terrorism, the Conference calls on the international community to take immediate action to stop the Israeli aggression and illegitimate practices and to lift the blockade. The Conference also requests the Security Council to take the necessary measures to provide international protection for the Palestinian people and to apply deterrent sanctions against Israel.

The Conference considers Israeli terrorist actions and aggressive practices as posing a threat to international peace and security and as dragging the region towards an all-out war, and therefore necessitating immediate action by the Security Council under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

The Conference welcomes the Arab peace initiative taken at the recent Arab summit conference in Beirut and requests the Security Council to put in place a mechanism for its implementation in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Council and international legitimacy.

It is the hope of my Government and that of all OIC member States that, in addressing the critical situation in Palestine, the Council will give serious consideration to this statement. Several of the OIC member States have spoken before me and my delegation fully associates itself with their eloquent and even passionate statements.

All peace-loving countries abhor terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and have joined in the global alliance to fight this scourge. The Islamic nations have done no less and are meeting in my capital city, Kuala Lumpur, to coordinate their actions so as to contribute effectively to this campaign, from which we must emerge victorious. However, it is necessary for the international community to differentiate between terrorism per se and the legitimate struggle for independence against foreign occupation and alien domination. While the killing of innocent civilians by individuals or groups of individuals cannot be justified and must be condemned, so must the massacre of innocents by the apparatus of the State. If we, the international community, are serious in our quest to combat terrorism, there cannot be double standards.

The Council must exercise its responsibility under the Charter and take immediate action to stop the carnage. It must act promptly to save the Palestinian people and its imperilled leadership, who is about to be

disposed of by an Israeli Government that is bent on a military victory at all costs. While we welcome the adoption of Council resolutions 1397 (2002) of 12 March 2002 and 1402 (2002) of 30 March 2002 as positive steps in addressing the situation, we call on the Council to back its pronouncements with immediate and concrete action. It is imperative for the Council to follow up on these resolutions, in particular, resolution 1402 (2002) which, inter alia, calls for an immediate ceasefire and the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Palestinian cities, including Ramallah. It is important for the Council not to allow itself to be sidelined again. To take no action would be tantamount to condoning the aggressive policies and actions of the Israeli Government and, worse still, would allow the situation to explode into a catastrophe of monumental proportions, which we would all regret.

The situation in the occupied territories is intolerable to the Palestinian people. Indeed, it is intolerable even to watch on the television screen. My delegation has warned time and again that unless immediate and resolute efforts are made by the Council to stop the violence we might reach a point of no return. In our view, that point has almost been reached.

We continue to hold the belief that what is urgently needed to stop the violence and arrest the slide towards war is for the Council to authorize the dispatch of a United Nations or international peacekeeping or monitoring force to the occupied territories, or at the very least to dispatch, initially, a Council fact-finding mission. We are therefore grateful to the Chair of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement for renewing the Movement's proposal to the Council just now.

Given the deep antipathy between the Palestinians and the Israelis, the intervention of a neutral third party is imperative. This is where we feel the Security Council can and should play a critical role. Along with others who are prepared to do so, it must become fully engaged in the effort to stop the violence and must join in the search for a lasting peace between the Arabs and the Israelis. It must stop the rampaging that is relentlessly going on in the occupied territories. It must help give substance to the vision of a Palestinian State that was articulated in Council resolution 1397 (2002).

The United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, remain the last hope for the Palestinian people. They look to the United Nations, as the champion of the oppressed, for the restitution of their rights as a people — rights that they have been deprived of for decades. My delegation is hopeful, Sir, that under your astute leadership, the Council will be able to muster the necessary political will and the wisdom and courage to do what is right and just for the Palestinian people.

In conclusion, Sir, let me commend you most sincerely for allowing non-members of the Council to address the Council before members have the opportunity to speak. I can assure you that this is very much appreciated by the non-members.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Malaysia for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Brazil. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Fonseca (Brazil): Let me first congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council and thank the members of the Council for convening this timely debate.

The international community comes once more to this Chamber to express its sadness in the face of the horrendous events that continue to take place in the Middle East. Brazil has consistently advocated a peaceful solution to the conflict. In the face of recent events, the Brazilian Government has reiterated that position in press communiqués over the past days. We also join the Rio Group in its call released yesterday for an immediate cessation of all acts of terrorism, provocation, incitement and destruction.

There are definitely no positive developments on the ground in the Middle East. But if there is a single trend that we welcome and encourage in the most vivid terms, it is the growing responsiveness of the Council to the challenge before the international community at this moment. In times of despair and disappointment for so many in the Middle East, it is towards the United Nations that world public opinion looks in the hope that reason and peace will eventually prevail. It is only natural that high hopes are placed on possible action by the Security Council. We welcome the recent adoption of resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002) and fully back their terms. But we strongly believe that the

Council can certainly do more to fully assert its responsibilities in this matter.

The Brazilian Government remains deeply alarmed by the growing and fast deterioration of the situation. We call upon the parties to comply immediately and thoroughly with Council resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002), especially with regard to a meaningful ceasefire. We join the international community in the call on Israel to suspend all military actions in the occupied territories, to roll back illegal occupation and settlement activities, to respect the Palestinian Authority and its leadership and to withdraw, without delay, from Palestinian cities. The threat that military escalation has brought to holy shrines of all three major monotheistic religions must stop immediately.

Recent military actions against the Palestinian Authority compound in Ramallah are, at the least, deplorable. The Israeli authorities must understand that excessive use of force does not generate any sense of security for their own people. On the contrary, it only fuels the dreadful spiral of violence and reprisals that makes the vision even more remote for everyone. We condemn the decision to isolate President Arafat and the attempts to threaten his physical integrity and demoralize his leadership over the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian people. Any attempt to exile him from his homeland would be yet a further and a grave mistake. It cannot, and will not, be accepted by the international community.

We fully understand the grievances of both Israelis and Palestinians. We all want their suffering to stop. But the disproportionate and lethal use of force by Israel as well as unacceptable acts of terrorism and suicide bombings by Palestinian militants only jeopardize even further any prospect of a lasting political settlement to the conflict in the Middle East. We are dismayed by the fact that the two parties are failing to keep the course towards a negotiated solution to the conflict and that their daily attitude towards each other seems to be designed to make that goal even more distant.

The Brazilian Government reaffirms its preparedness to cooperate fully with the Security Council in the implementation of actions designed to resume the peace process and promote peaceful coexistence between Israel and a Palestinian State. We remain faithful to the aspiration of the State of Israel to exist within secure and recognized borders as well as to that of Palestine to an independent, democratic and economically viable State.

No military solution can ever bring about that vision. Nor will it be achieved through the isolated efforts of any party no matter how powerful and influential it may be. The only possible route is respect for human rights and for the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. The only possible instruments are those based on the legitimacy of international law. Resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace are the points of reference for the resumption of the peace process in a negotiated settlement between the parties. A ceasefire is urgently needed, but it cannot be obtained through the expansion of illegal occupation and the use of increased armed force. No ceasefire will stand in the absence of a political framework.

The practical question before us today is what should the Security Council do to further the cause of reason and peace. We think we need more active involvement of the Council on the ground. We believe that the Council has a special responsibility to use its tools in order to demand compliance with its decisions. We think that it is the Council's duty to call upon the representatives of Israel and Palestine to explain, at the highest possible level, what they are effectively doing to respond to the Council's demands. We believe that the Council should be directly briefed by all emissaries whose efforts the international community continues to support. We remain committed to the idea of establishing an international monitoring mechanism to help the parties implement the recommendations of the Mitchell report and the Tenet plan and support the efforts carried out on the ground by the special envoy Anthony Zinni. An international presence, with the full backing of the United Nations, seems indispensable now.

Last but not least, the Security Council must lay out a clear strategy to move ahead with new and constructive approaches, such as the initiative by Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, recently endorsed by the League of Arab States. Let me reaffirm that Brazil will strongly support any initiative decided upon by the Security Council with a view to achieving political freedom, peace, stability and prosperity for all in the Middle East.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Brazil for his kind words addressed to me.

The last speaker on my list before I suspend the meeting is the representative of Pakistan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): Thank you, Mr. President, for accommodating me at this late hour. I know that we are all running against time. I promised that I would be brief, and I will be.

First, my congratulations go to you, Sir, on your presidency. Then, I express profound appreciation to my colleague, Ambassador Peter Kolby, for a very productive presidency, at the last meeting of which the Council produced its resolution 1402 (2002).

The question is, how long shall we continue to repeat our scripts one after the other? The time has now come for action. The Security Council must address itself to how to enforce its decisions. These debates reflect international sentiment both here in the Chamber and in the outside world, but now the Security Council must meet in some other room and seriously address the question of the enforceability of its decisions.

The Council met only last Friday to consider the grievous situation in Palestine. Resolution 1402 (2002) was adopted to reverse the spiralling violence and bloodshed. Painfully, there has been no let-up in the scale of carnage. Many more people have died, and violence has generated more violence. This only demonstrates how helpless the Security Council has become and how scanty is the respect for its resolutions and decisions. This trend is not only a cause for serious concern, but it is also alarmingly indicative of the inability of the Council to uphold its moral authority and its Charter obligations.

What is being said today by most of my colleagues one after the other was said at the last meeting and at earlier meetings, so I shall not repeat all the things I said in my last statement. I would only say that it is time to seriously address the question of implementing the outstanding resolutions of this Council without selectivity or delay. The very credibility of this body depends on that.

We strongly urge all concerned to fulfil their Charter obligations and to take the necessary steps to implement Security Council resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002), ensuring an immediate and effective ceasefire along with an Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian cities, followed up with the resumption of the peace process, including the implementation of the Tenet work plan and the Mitchell report recommendations.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Pakistan for the kind words he addressed to me.

In view of the lateness of the hour, I would also like to thank the interpreters for their understanding.

I shall now suspend this meeting until 3 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 1.40 p.m.